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Author's note: start

[image]

Hi guys! This is my first fan fiction that i'm putting on wattpad, and i hope you enjoy it! I've been working on this story like forever lol, i started it in May 2020.

Anyways, if you started reading the story, i would just like to say thank you for giving it a chance. It means a lot to me that you read my story!

I would HUGELY appreciate it if you would vote or comment on the story, it, means a lot to me! Don't be a silent reader! :)

Also, if this story is still ongoing when you read it, i'm sooooo sorry for slow updates, my motivation comes in bursts 😬

All the characters and Clans belong to me, but the base of the whole 'warriors' thing (apprentices, warrior code, ways of the Clans) belongs to Erin Hunter.

Anyways, that's all i really wanted to say, and may StarClan light your path! :p

Allegiances

[image]

ShadeClan

LEADER- Twigstar- she-cat- gray tabby

DEPUTY- Duskblaze- she-cat- ginger tabby

MEDICINE CAT- Sunwatcher- tom- golden tabby, white paws

WARRIORS-

Bounceleap- tom- ginger tabby, white paws

Snowflame- she-cat- white pelt

Firefrost- she-cat- white with ginger paws, eartips and tail tip

Icefur- tom- white pelt

Stormfeather- tom- dark gray

Dawnlight- she-cat- light ginger

Lionpounce- tom- long furred golden tabby

Tawnyshade- she-cat- tortoiseshell with black paws

Troutstripe- tom- gray/brown tabby

Thunderheart- tom- thick gray pelt

Alderclaw- tom- dark ginger with white splotch on chest

Skyrunner- she-cat- dark ginger tabby

Driftbreeze- she-cat- brown tabby

Swiftfall- she-cat- light brown tabby

Tigercloud- tom- dark brown tabby with white paws, belly, and chest

Queens-

Echosplash- she-cat- very dark gray tabby- mother of Jaykit (gray tabby she-cat with two distinctive black stripes beside each eye) and Ravenkit (black tom)

Dovepelt- she-cat- gray tabby- mother to Alderkit (dark ginger tom; white paws)

Silversky- she-cat- mother to Hazelkit (tan tabby she-cat), Frostkit (spotted light gray she-cat), and Robinkit (gray/brown she-cat)

Lynxfur- she-cat- mother to Blackkit (black tabby tom) and Heatherkit (light brown she-cat)

ELDERS-

Storktail- tom- white with brown spots

Stonewish- she-cat- gray tabby

LakeClan

LEADER- Spotstar- tom- white pelt with multicolored spots

DEPUTY- Reedslip- tom- gray/brown tabby

MEDICINE CAT- Shellcloud**-** tom- Siamese; **Apprentice, Streamspirit**

WARRIORS-

Sedgestep- tom- brown/gray tabby **Apprentice, Riverpaw**

Rowanpelt- tom- ginger tabby

Spotswoop- she-cat- blue gray with darker spots

Sootstorm- tom- gray with black spots

Sandthistle- she-cat- light golden tabby

Hopewillow- she-cat- silver tabby

Gorseflame- tom- gray tabby

Jaggedstripe- tom- white with long jagged black stripe down one hind leg

Flowerfrost- she-cat- golden tabby **Apprentice, Rainpaw**

Dewfeather- tom- blue/gray

Ripplemist- tom- light gray tabby

Embermoon- she-cat- ginger tabby

Yellowclaw- tom- golden tabby

QUEENS-

Foxleaf- she-cat- dark ginger

Blossomshine- she-cat- tortoiseshell

Pouncefall- she-cat- blue/gray

Ivyfern- she-cat- cream colored

ELDERS-

Jumpwing- tom- black

Blazemoon- she-cat- light ginger tabby

APPRENTICES-

Streamspirit- she-cat- silver tabby

Rainpaw- she-cat- tortoiseshell

Riverpaw- tom- shiny silver pelt

BreezeClan

LEADER- Bristlestar- she-cat- blue/gray

DEPUTY- Splashfame- tom- ginger with black ear tips

MEDICINE CAT- Echosight- tom- very dark gray tabby

WARRIORS-

Eelstrike- tom- tan tabby

Juniperheart- she-cat- black with white paws

Maplefoot- tom- tortoiseshell

Stagfeather- she-cat- white with gray/brown spots

Doesong- she-cat- cream tabby

Otterclaw- tom- brown tabby

Snakecrawl- tom- gray/brown tabby

Shredthorn- tom

Meadowshine- she-cat- light brown tabby

Rushleap- she-cat- white with brown stripes; **Apprentice, Timberpaw**

Littlehawk- tom- white with brown spots; **Apprentice, Flintpaw**

Owlear- tom- brown tabby

QUEENS-

Crowshade- she-cat- black tabby

Fawnskip- she cat- light brown tabby

Nightsky- she-cat- very dark gray tabby

Sleekfeather- she-cat- light golden tabby

ELDERS-

Ashwing- tom- spotted gray

Goosefur- tom- light blue gray tabby

Fogsight- she-cat- light gray tabby

APPRENTICES-

Timberpaw- tom- light brown tabby

Flintpaw- she-cat- silver tabby with black paws and muzzle

StormClan

LEADER- Deerstar- she-cat- light brown with white spots

DEPUTY- Sparkflight- tom- ginger with white flecks

MEDICINE CAT- Oakfern- she-cat- brown tabby; **Apprentice, Swallowsight**

WARRIORS-

Scarclaw- tom- dark ginger with lots of scars

Rabbitspring- she-cat- cream tabby

Rivershade- tom- darkish silver tabby; **Apprentice, Stagpaw**

Oatspot- tom- dark brown with lighter brown spots

Ratheart- tom- brown/gray tabby

Sparrowspring- she-cat brown/gray tabby; **Apprentice, Tinypaw**

Leafbreeze- she-cat- light gray tabby

Rootwing- she-cat- golden with white spots; **Apprentice, Thrushpaw**

Toadspring- tom- black; **Apprentice, Graypaw**

Badgerclaw- tom- black and white tabby

Cricketwhisker- she-cat- black tabby

Goldentail- she-cat- gold tabby

QUEENS-

Fallenstorm- she-cat- blue gray

ELDERS-

Fennelleaf- tom- gray tabby

Elderbark- she-cat- silver tabby

Willowleaf- she-cat- tortoiseshell

APPRENTICES-

Swallowsight- tom- brown tabby

Stagpaw- tom- dark gray tabby

Tinypaw- tom- blue gray tabby

Thrushpaw- she-cat- tan tabby

Graypaw- she-cat- gray tabby

Prologue

[image]

Echosplash crept silently toward the LakeClan border, the moonlight rippling on her sleek grey tabby pelt. She inhaled, catching the scent of a LakeClan cat; a distinct scent. One that she knew, one that reminded her of security. Safety in a forest that often gave her reason to need it. She dove into a clump of ferns, hiding her dark fur, in case the cat she scented wasn't alone.

She peered out, seeing a silver striped LakeClan tom. *Ripplemist*, she thought with relief. She slid out of her hiding spot, wincing as brambles caught on her pelt.

"Ripplemist- I have great news!" exclaimed Echosplash. "I-" she was cut short whenever she tried to press against him, but he pulled away, a look of fear flashing on his face.

"ShadeClan patrol!" he hissed, pale blue eyes wide. "Hide!" Echosplash dove into a group of tall red poppies, hoping to mask her scent as the patrol emerged into the clearing.

Bounceleap, Icefur, Snowflame, and Firefrost of ShadeClan appeared, tasting the air. Echosplash felt a small pinch of guilt in her pelt at the feeling of hiding from her clanmates. The feeling wasn't as intense as it had been many moons before; these meetings with Ripplemist had been a little more than regular.

"Do you smell LakeClan?" questioned Icefur. Echosplash held her breath, closing her deep blue eyes in anticipation.

"Well, duh, the border is *right* there." responded Snowflame. Echosplash opened her eyes a sliver to see Icefur, Snowflame's sister, rolling her eyes at him. Seeming convinced, they re-marked the scent lines and paced away to patrol the rest of the border for any impending threats. Echosplash caught her breath and crept out of her hiding space.

She padded over to join Ripplemist. "*Now* can I tell you what I came here to say?" Irritation pricked her pelt from the interruption, but it battled with the ease she always felt when she saw the tom.

"Always straight to the point." Ripplemist turned to her with a warm expression, his words affectionate. "Of course." he purred, flicking his furry ears.

"Ripplemist- I'm expecting kits...our kits." Echosplash admitted quietly, blinking up at him. He stood slightly taller than her, with tufts of thick white fur covering his underbelly. He was built like a LakeClan cat, with thick fur that withstood the chill of the water and a shining pelt.

Ripplemist's facial expression turned to shock. "What!?" he exclaimed, becoming more quiet when Echsplash shot him a worried look and shot a glance in the direction the patrol had left. "They'll be half-clan! How will you explain this to Twigstar?"

Echosplash was taken aback. "I don't have to tell the clan who the father is. Aren't you happy?" she asked in a small voice. This was unlike him. But then, she remembered, his father was Spotstar; the clan leader. The warrior code had likely been repeated in his ears like a chant since he was a young kit. Which was ironic, given by their current meeting. Ripplemist probably felt like he was betraying not just his fellow warriors, but everything his father stood for.

Ripplemist's facial expression softened. "Of course. I want to be the father of your kits and raise them together more than ever. Who would be disappointed to have kits with a cat as perfect as you!" He pressed his forehead against hers, and Echosplash could hear a suppressed purr in his chest. "But you have to choose," he said. "Your clan, or the one you love." the moonlight glimmered off of his icy eyes.

Echosplash sighed. She knew he was right. *We can't keep meeting up like this.* She thought. *That patrol was a whisker away from getting us.*

She knew what she had to do. "I will raise the kits in ShadeClan, and we will stop meeting." Her voice was cold, but the chill was

forced. She would have time to be upset over losing the love of her life at a different time. What mattered most now would be taking care of their kits. "We have to." she said in a smaller voice. She knew that out of all cats, Ripplemist could spot the fake firmness in her words. He saw her like no other cat did. She didn't have to hold up her toughness around him.

There was sadness in Ripplemist's eyes, a type of loss. He was the perfect cat to father kits. Nurturing, kind, and easygoing- but not too easygoing. However, there was also understanding. "Raise them well," he said. "But you can never tell your clan who their father is. It would ruin them. And you." He blinked rapidly, and Echosplash saw the disappointment in the way his nose wrinkled for a moment. He wasn't disappointed that they were having kits, he was disappointed that they couldn't raise them together.

They briefly touched noses. Echosplash couldn't believe this moment, their collection of secret moments, was over. She wished she could make it last forever. Echosplash didn't say anything else, not wanting the meeting to hurt more than it already did.

As she padded back to camp, she stole one last glance at Ripplemist, his silky silver pelt gleaming even through the brambles. He was glancing back at her at the same time, and she watched the hope fade from his frosty eyes.

Goodbye, Ripplemist. We will meet with our kits again in StarClan.

Chapter 1

[image]

Jaykit let out a fake growl, and pounced lightly on Hazelkit.

"Hey!" Hazelkit whined. "You're squashing me!"

"Sorry." Jaykit mumbled, rolling her eyes. She glanced at her brother, Ravenkit, and her cousin, Alderkit. They were both fast asleep. *Boring.* She thought with an irritated shake of her head. "You're the only one awake, Hazelkit. Can't we play?"

"No." Hazelkit replied, her mew muffled by pushing her muzzle into her brown fur. "Go to sleep, Jaykit."

Jaykit huffed out a sigh. She wasn't sleepy; how could she be, with her apprentice ceremony approaching so soon? She was eager to be doing anything other than sit in the nursery all day. Even helping pick fleas off the elders sounded more interesting. She did have a certain interest in mind, though. For the last few moons, she had watched with her brother as the clan medicine cat treated various injuries, his golden paws moving deftly with experience. Jaykit wanted to be that smart one day.

She crept out of the nursery, into the heart of the camp. The ShadeClan camp was drenched nearly entirely in shadows from the tall pine trees that extended far into the sky above, meaning the camp was nice and cool. ShadeClan cats were known for their love of those shadows, their vision often adjusting easily to the nighttime lack of light. Many of the cats went hunting when it was dark, enjoying the quietness of the moon's descent upon the forest.

She spotted Stormfeather sharing tongues with his mate, Dovepelt, the mother of sleeping Alderkit. She also saw Sunwatcher, the medicine cat, collecting some herbs at the edge of camp.

Out of the corner of her eye, Jaykit saw a hunting patrol come into camp with a delicious looking haul of fresh kill, but she was far

more intrigued by Sunwatcher's herb gathering.

Jaykit padded over to Sunwatcher and asked, "Hey, Sunwatcher, what are those herbs for?"

Sunwatcher turned his soft amber eyes on Jaykit. They were similar to his golden tabby pelt, the color of his eyes looking like he really did watch the sun and some of its bright color had seeped into them. "These are daisy leaves. They're good for aches and pains. Want to help me pick some?" he asked Jaykit.

"Sure!" Jaykit said, her paws tingling with a shy excitement. Of course she wanted to learn how to heal her fellow clan members, and she had to start somewhere, right? "How should I pick them?"

"Like this." Sunwatcher bent down, tipped his head to one side, and plucked the leaf from the base. "Now you try."

Jaykit crouched down, nipped at the leaf, and set it on his pile. "Good job!" said Sunwatcher kindly. "You'd be a great medicine cat."

"Really?" asked Jaykit. "I'd love to do that- I don't have much interest in hunting or fighting... healing the Clan sounds much more important. And I wanna be smart like you." Her sky blue eyes blinked up into his yellow ones with curiosity.

Sunwatcher's eyes widened. "Really, Jaykit? You want to be a medicine cat?" he flicked his ear. "It's not all about herbs, you know."

"What else is there?" Jaykit asked.

"Every half-moon, medicine cats go to the SilverTree, a huge silver birch tree where we speak to StarClan to get advice for the future of the clans."

"Wow!" Jaykit had never been more excited to start her apprenticeship. She would be apprenticed in just a quarter moon! In the back of her head she was glad that she'd told Sunwatcher about her interest in healing; she wouldn't have wanted to get to that day and be apprenticed as a warrior because she forgot to ask about alternate roles in the clan "Sunwatcher?" she started. "Can I be a

medicine cat?"

Sunwatcher looked faintly surprised, but also like he was expecting the question. "Why do you want to train as a medicine cat?" He asked inquisitively.

"I think herbs and their healing properties are really cool!" She saw Sunwatcher's whiskers twitch in amusement. "And I'm not as interested in hunting or fighting. This is a better way to help my Clan. And speaking to StarClan sounds amazing!" her blue eyes sparkled like lakewater. "and I'd have a great mentor." she added.

Sunwatcher gazed at her curiously. "I'll speak to Twigstar."

Jaykit jumped up and down, squealing, "Thank you!"

"Maybe I'll have to call you Jaysqueak." Sunwatcher purred, but the young kit, full of energy, was already halfway across camp.

Jaykit bounced over to the nursery to tell the other kits the good news! "Robinkit!" Jaykit called, seeing her outside of the nursery. "I'm going to be a medicine cat!"

A quarter moon later.

"From this moment on, you will be known as Jaypaw until you get your full medicine cat name." Twigstar turned to Sunwatcher. "Mentor her well."

The ceremony went on, with Jaypaw's brother Ravenpaw being apprenticed to Dawnlight. As he slipped out of camp to see the forest with his mentor, giving Jaypaw a flick with his tail before he left, Jaypaw felt a pang at the fact that she would never train with her brother.

But then she remembered that she was training as a medicine cat! Nothing in the whole forest could stop her from being the best medicine cat she could be!

Or so you think.

Jaypaw flinched. That voice- it was sort of in her head, but it wasn't

hers. It was deeper, and had a clear ring to it.

She turned around to see a huge black and white tomcat illuminated in her vision. *What in all the sky's clouds?*

She staggered back, accidentally stepping on Troutstripe's tail. "Sorry!" she yelped. She shook her head, her thick gray fur rustling, in an attempt to get the strange tomcat she'd seen out of her mind. Her mind often raced, and now was a good demonstration of it; she was flooded with questions like *who was that and what is he doing here and was in the only one to see that and-*

"It's fine." the old brown and gray tom mumbled, rolling his amber eyes and smiling a bit. "My tail's been trodden on more times than i've caught mice."

"Are you sure? I could...fetch you something from the medicine den."

"Sure, medicine cat. If you insist." he said, his voice tinged with amusement. she trotted away, smiling, and he called, "If I don't need anything, you can treat my next battle wound!" Jaypaw stifled a *mrrow* of laughter.

She crept into the medicine den. *Her* den, now. Well, one that she shared. "Sunwatcher, is there anything that I need for a tail that's been stepped on?" Jaypaw stepped into the cave until she was under the hole that let sun in.

"A trodden tail?" Sunwatcher said, coming into the light. The sun made his darker yellow stripes shine like gold. "No, I think that will be fine without treatment."

"Okay." Jaypaw meowed. "What do you want me to do, O great mentor?"

"You could check on the elders, O tiny apprentice, and tell me if they're having any trouble."

"Hey!" Jaypaw squeaked indignantly. "I'm not *tiny!"*

Jaypaw marched over to the elders' den, her definitely not tiny tail

held high. She could hear Storktail snoozing peacefully, his chest rising and falling.

Storktail was the older elder, and Stonewish had joined the elders shortly before Jaypaw was born.

"Hello, Stonewish." Jaypaw whispered, careful not to wake Storktail.

Stonewish craned her gray head to look at her. "Hello, Jaypaw." she meowed.

"Do you need anything?" Jaypaw asked.

"My old paws are a bit sore. If you could fetch me something, that would be great."

"Alright, Stonewish, I'll be back in a few heartbeats!"

As Jaypaw left the den, she thought she saw Stonewish's whiskers twitch with amusement, similar to her mate, Troutstripe's, minutes before. "Young cats." she meowed.

This is my destiny! Jaypaw thought happily. *I'll be the best medicine cat!*

What if you aren't? whispered the strange voice again.

Annoyed, Jaypaw thought fiercely back, *who are you?*

I am Darkspirit, and I come from the Shadow Sea.

Chapter 2

[image]

"Keep grumbling, Ravenpaw, and I'll have you checking the elders for fleas!"

"Alright, alright, keep your fur on!" Ravenpaw was battle training with Dawnlight and Tawnyshade, and he was not having a good time doing it. He had already done a good job at the move they were showing him, but they kept making him do it again, and again, and *again!* "I just want to try a different move, that's all." under his breath, he added, "I've practically mastered it."

Ravenpaw heard the bracken shiver behind him a second too late and whipped around to see his mentor Dawnlight pinning him down with sheathed claws. "Mastered the move, huh?" she said. "Watch out for the enemy's best weapon- the element of surprise!"

Ravenpaw sighed and went limp underneath his mentor, attempting to fool her. She loosened her grip, and then he jabbed out with his hind legs, pushing her off him. She landed with an *oof*! and Ravenpaw sprung up. "The enemy's best weapon, the element of surprise." repeated Ravenpaw.

"Where did you learn *that* move?" asked Tawnyshade, her voice impressed.

"Oh, I came up with it on my own." Ravenpaw said proudly, licking a paw and drawing it over his ear to clean some of the dirt from being pinned. Most of the ground beneath them was covered in a soft blanket of pine needles, but sometimes the training scuffles could get dirty.

"Hmm." mewed Dawnlight. "Well, it was a smart move for the situation. Good job, Ravenpaw.

They had been training for half a moon, and Jaypaw would be traveling to the SilverTree with Sunwatcher to be accepted by

StarClan and meet the other medicine cats tonight. Ravenpaw sure was glad he wasn't a medicine cat- there were too many herbs, plants, mixtures and procedures. He wouldn't be able to do it.

He didn't see how Jaypaw could do it day in and day out. Maybe it gave her somewhere to put her seemingless energy. Still, he couldn't see how she was so cheerful about it all the time. Wasn't she ever upset that Echosplash hadn't ever told them who their father was? Or that leaf-bare was soon and things would be very cold and prey would be scarce? What about the fact that the Clan was extremely scarce with their apprentices this season? Or-

Perhaps you are the smarter one, whispered a voice in his head.

Who in StarClan are you? Ravenpaw thought, startled. That voice definitely wasn't his. Where did that come from?

"Ravenpaw!" Dawnlight's fierce voice snapped Ravenpaw back into the living world. "Your training is over. You can go to camp now."

"Finally." Ravenpaw mumbled. As he walked back to camp, his thoughts wandered a bit. He didn't understand some things that other cats enjoyed, like chasing butterflies or playing moss ball. When he and Jaypaw had been little kits alongside the others in the nursery, he'd often felt a little left out with the others because their games hadn't appealed to him much. He preferred to explore camp, sneaking around in the shadows like the ShadeClan cat he was. His pelt blended in perfectly with the darkness, and made it easy for him to look around freely. One time, when he was merely two moons old, he'd gotten in trouble with Echosplash for sneaking out of camp and going into the forest. It had been an embarrassing scolding in front of the deputy, Duskblaze, and several of the warriors.

He was a bit embarrassed to admit it, but one thing he did enjoy even after being a kit was hearing stories from the elders. Ravenpaw always took his time while cleaning out the elders' den or searching them for ticks, hoping to hear about a grand battle won by ShadeClan or one of Twigstar's brave adventures.

As he padded into camp, he was rather lost in thought, thinking

about the stories he'd heard as a kit and didn't notice the huge, nearly inch long thorn sticking up only a tail length away. He kept walking, and a few seconds later, stepped on it.

Ravenpaw let out a howl of pain, stopping for a moment and hopping forward on three paws to make sure he didn't drive the thorn in deeper. He limped into camp, grimacing with nearly each step. He'd stepped on the thorn with his right forepaw. He hopped over to the medicine den, feeling warm red blood trickling over his paw.

"Jaypaw!" he yowled. "I stepped on a thorn, and I need treatment!!"

Stupid, he thought. *I can master a battle move in a few minutes but a thorn reduces me to a whiny kit.*

"Coming!" came Jaypaw's call from the back of the den. She had a bundle of sweet smelling leaves and a stick in her jaws. "A thorn?" she asked, setting down her leaves and stick.

Ravenpaw nodded, lifting his paw to let Jaypaw examine it. The thorn had driven deep into his paw; you could only see the blunt end and a small bit of the body.

"Put this stick between your jaws." Jaypaw said.

"Why?" Ravenpaw asked, his words muffled by the stick Jaypaw put up to his mouth.

"Because I'm your medicine cat and I told you to." Jaypaw wrenched the thorn out just as Ravenpaw bit on the stick. Ravenpaw let out a yelp of pain and felt blood flow over his paw, and he realized that clenching the stick between his jaws helped lessen the pain a bit.

Jaypaw chewed up the leaves she had and plastered them onto Ravenpaw's paw, and Ravenpaw felt her wipe the blood off with a large leaf before adding the chewed up one. She then wrapped a sticky layer of cobwebs around his paw and told him that as long as he took it easy on his paw, he could go and would be fine.

Ravenpaw mumbled his thanks and slouched from the den, feeling

angered at his un-alertness.

He kept the weight easy on his paw though.

Ravenpaw had just curled up in his den when he heard some sort of commotion outside. He flattened his ears. *Couldn't any cat get sleep here?* He thought frustratedly. You'd think with the apprentice's den to himself, he would be able to have some peace. The den was a very nice one, too, the floor covered in a thick layer of moss and the roof completely solid, a woven blanket of leafy twigs and flowering vines that had grown there over time. Light was let in through a small opening at the top, a small strip of sunlight that broke through the camp's canopy.

But eventually, curiosity got the best of Ravenpaw and he headed outside the den to see what it was.

The sight that he was met with was not pretty. A border patrol composed of Lionpounce, Thunderheart, Alderclaw, and Bounceleap stood at the entrance of the camp, each cat with several scratches each. Thunderheart was the worst- he had a particularly nasty gash along one side and was panting heavily.

"What happened?" came the authoritative voice of Twigstar, the leader. The sound made Ravenpaw stand up a little straighter out of respect. Twigstar's gray pelt flashed in the corner of his eyes as she rushed from her den to meet the patrol.

Thunderheart could only get out one word, before he passed out.

"LakeClan!"

Chapter 3

[image]

Jaypaw's mind raced as she remembered the herbs to put on Thunderheart's wound. Cobweb, marigold...*StarClan! What else?* Jaypaw picked up the bundle of herbs that her frazzled brain had managed to think of and took it outside to the bloody patrol scene.

Sunwatcher turned and gratefully took the herbs that she set down next to Thunderheart and began to use some cobwebs to calm the bleeding. "Could you grab some comfrey root, Jaypaw? It'll help the pain when he wakes."

Comfrey root! Why couldn't I remember?

Jaypaw dashed to the medicine den and snatched up comfrey root, taking the opportunity to lock the taste and scent in her mind for next time. Well, hopefully there won't *be* a next time. It's nice to hope, but realistically, this is one of the many battle wounds she will have to treat.

She dropped it at Sunwatcher's paws. "Chew it into a poultice, and lick it into his wound while I check on the others." said Sunwatcher, picking up the leftover cobweb and marigold. "Make sure that he has enough cobwebs to keep the wound from continuing to bleed before you do so." He padded over to Bounceleap and began to look at his wounds.

Jaypaw chewed up the comfrey root, thinking. *Why had LakeClan done this? could we have done something to them?* She kept her paw secure on the cobwebs on Thunderheart's side- the bleeding had finally slowed, and the blood wasn't seeping through the cobwebs as fast when it came to this layer that she applied.

Clever, whispered Darkspirit's voice in her head, yet again.

GO AWAY! Jaypaw thought, trying to make her thoughts as loud and big as possible in her head, driving out Darkspirit's voice. Who

would even name one of their warriors Darkspirit without thinking he would be a bad cat? Who even was he, and how could she hear his voice? She'd briefly considered asking Sunwatcher about him, but another part of her wanted to figure it out on her own.

She began to lick the poultice into Thunderheart's wound. *Don't you ever go away?* she thought. *What do you want?*

I want to see if you're worthy of training in the Shadow Sea with me. As for going away, well, I get to decide that. And your petty little medicine cat thoughts are getting quite annoying, so I may leave soon.

Jaypaw growled under her breath, stretching cobwebs over Thunderheart's wound, keeping the poultice in place. *Petty! I'll show him who's petty!*

As for this- Shadow Sea- Darkspirit had to be dead, otherwise how was he in her head, briefly appearing in reality? Where other cats couldn't see him? He was clearly a spirit cat. She knew that StarClan had that power, but maybe cats from the Shadow Sea did too. Was the Shadow Sea some kind of dark StarClan? The evil tone in his voice made her think so.

Maybe the Shadow Sea is like a different StarClan? Maybe the cats who don't deserve to go to StarClan go there? Because Darkspirit didn't sound like he belonged in StarClan.

Jaypaw turned her attention back to Thunderheart, whose sleep seemed more peaceful now. His dark, thick gray fur had made it slightly difficult for her to treat the wound, but it was clean and hopefully healing now without any infection.

Maybe Darkspirit's voice was just a figment of her imagination. Maybe she was going crazy. Well, if she was, she was a medicine cat. Maybe there's an herb for crazy.

Thunderheart was showing signs that he would begin to stir soon. Jaypaw dashed toward the medicine den, grabbed poppy seeds, and ran back out before the young tom warrior could open his eyes. Jaypaw really liked Thunderheart, and hoped her treatment would

heal him just fine. He had been an apprentice when she was born, and she could vaguely remember his warrior ceremony. He was a big apprentice who grew fast, and by the time he was made a warrior, he had been just as big as Twigstar herself, standing tall while he received his new name.

She placed the seeds in front of Thunderheart's muzzle, the herbs that they might need later on running through her head; she could apply dock leaf to his and the other cats' scratches, maybe some stinging nettle for the swelling of the wound, horsetail if it got infected. She had a little glow inside- she was getting better at remembering! Despite maybe forgetting some things.

His muzzle twitched, and he blinked his amber eyes open. He looked around, slight confusion in his eyes, but Jaypaw knew what to do.

"Eat these." Jaypaw gestured toward the poppy seeds, her voice soft. She didn't want to make any headache he would have received from the loss of blood worse. Thunderheart weakly licked up the seeds with a groan of pain and a "Thanks, Jaypaw." But he curled back up once he had taken them, drifting slowly into a deep sleep where he would feel less pain.

With a jolt, Jaypaw remembered that her meeting with StarClan at the SilverTree was tonight! She was so excited to meet StarClan, and the medicine cats from other clans. She had heard that BreezeClan cats were as fast as foxes, even faster maybe; running along the fields filled with tall grasses after their prey. And LakeClan cats could swim?

As she continued to think, Sunwatcher padded up to her. "Jaypaw, would you help me carry Thunderheart to the medicine den?"

Jaypaw shook her head, clearing her mind, and gently lifted Thunderheart's thick scruff; it was pale grey, in comparison to the deep slate of the rest of his body. He shifted slightly as Sunwatcher hauled his flank onto his back, but didn't wake. Together, Jaypaw and Sunwatcher carried Thunderheart to the medicine den and lowered him into a cozy nest- it was filled with fresh moss, due to one of Jaypaw's daytime duties.

"What a coincidence." Jaypaw heard Sunwatcher mumble. "The night I need to take my apprentice to the SilverTree, we get attacked by an enemy patrol!" he shook his head. He bent over and sniffed Thunderheart's wound, examining it thoroughly. "He should have enough herbs on him to last him through the night. The other members of the patrol weren't badly injured, thank the stars. Good job caring for him, Jaypaw."

"When do we go to the SilverTree?" Jaypaw asked, trying not to let the big glow that she felt from his compliment show. She was glad, but also wanted to show that she was humble.

"Very soon." Sunwatcher replied. The sun was low in the sky, giving it a rusty color, similar to Thunderheart's amber eyes that had peeked at her before falling into his slumber. "We should get going. I'll tell Twigstar."

Jaypaw's pelt fizzed with curiosity. Her first meeting as a medicine cat! As Sunwatcher padded off, Jaypaw let her mind wander again. Would the other medicine cats like her? Would she be the only apprentice there? Could she make new friends? They had talked about many aspects of being a medicine cat, but they hadn't yet talked about the cats from other clans.

Don't trust them. Darkspirit hissed. ***You can never trust anyone!***

Good point! Jaypaw's face scrunched up, irritated that he was back. *That's why I don't trust* you*!* Darkspirit's presence seemed to slip out of her mind, and Jaypaw felt like her thoughts were a little clearer.

That sure shut him up, she thought with satisfaction.

"Time to go, Jaypaw!" Sunwatcher called from the camp entrance, standing tall despite the age he was starting to gain. His golden pelt nearly melted into the sky behind him.

"Coming!" Jaypaw bounded over to him, her fidgety paws almost causing her to trip. What a day! She had successfully treated her first battle wound, and she was on her way to become a medicine cat in the eyes of StarClan.

"The SilverTree is this way." Sunwatcher said, beginning to trek uphill, Jaypaw on his heels.

Jaypaw struggled a little to keep up with the bigger cat, but she eventually maintained the same pace as him, her eagerness making her quick. "Do you remember your first trip to the SilverTree?" she asked her mentor.

He smiled, nodding. "Oh, yes. It was many moons ago, but it was a day that I'll never forget."

"Was it cool meeting StarClan?"

"I'm not sure if 'cool' is a dignified enough word for meeting your warrior and medicine cat ancestors, but sure. I guess you could say it was pretty cool."

Another thought crossed Jaypaw's mind, causing her excitement to falter a bit. "Was it scary?" she asked, in a smaller voice.

Sunwatcher cast a glance at her. "It was a bit intimidating, for sure. I remember wondering how I was going to live up to all these cats." Jaypaw could suddenly imagine it, young Sunwatcher in the starry fields of StarClan, blinking up with wide amber eyes at the hundreds of starry cats that had shaped the paths they now walked on. "But it gets less scary as you become more experienced. You start to grow up, and the pawsteps seem a little easier to fill." he met Jaypaw's blue eyes, seeing her emotions swirling within them. "I have no doubts that you'll be worthy in the eyes of StarClan, Jaypaw."

She smiled at the older tom, feeling warm affection glowing in her chest. "Thanks, Sunwatcher."

He nodded. "When I've gone to join the ranks of StarClan, I think you'll do a fine job of being the leading medicine cat one day."

Jaypaw shot him a look of alarm. "Join StarClan? I surely hope you won't be doing that in a hurry!" She hadn't been his apprentice for long, but Jaypaw had always known the warm presence of the golden cat in the Clan, there for her when she had made any silly

mistakes as a kit and gotten herself hurt. She had a great amount of respect for him, and didn't want to feel the gaping loss in the camp that would be caused by his absence anytime in the near future.

Sunwatcher gave a purr of laughter. "I didn't say *soon.* I just said one day."

"Well, good." Jaypaw huffed. "It better not be anytime soon."

After a short while of walking, they came to a thunderpath. Jaypaw wrinkled her nose as a stinking, loud, shiny twoleg monster shot by on the hard gray path. "When I say run, we run." Sunwatcher said seriously.

"Okay." Jaypaw responded. She let the tip of her paw touch the hot stone path. She knew how serious the thunderpath was. Echosplash had warned her and Ravenpaw as kits not to go anywhere near it until they were old enough and with a warrior, and then never to go near it alone until they knew how to properly cross.

Another monster swept by on the path, hot and foul-smelling. "Run!" said Sunwatcher as soon as it passed. Jaypaw dashed across the path, Sunwatcher beside her.

Jaypaw hit the cool grass on the other side of the road. She was thankful for the soft green stalks under her paws- the thunderpath was rough and hard. She didn't understand how the monsters could run on it all day, and never get tired. Especially with those stupid twolegs in their bellies all the time.

"Look up." Sunwatcher said after they had disappeared into the other side of the tree line and rounded a corner into a small clearing. Jaypaw tilted her head upwards and felt her jaw drop open in awe, her thoughts immediately drifting from thunderpaths and twolegs.

A huge birch tree, extremely old, but with many branches, stood before her. It had a silver sort of glow, like the stars, so bright that she had to squint. The leaves fluttered in the wind, large and healthy, looking like nothing could ever strike them down.

"Is it-", Jaypaw began.

"That", Sunwatcher said with a smile, "Is the SilverTree."

[image]

The SilverTree looks like this, but bigger.

Chapter 4

[image]

"Well, Sunwatcher, it looks like you've finally gotten yourself an apprentice."

The unfamiliar voice snapped Jaypaw out of her awe at the SilverTree. She turned to see a dark brown tabby she-cat with light amber eyes padding towards the SilverTree and herself.

"Hello. I'm Oakfern." she said. She seemed decently friendly at first glance. "This is my apprentice, Swallowsight."

Oakfern guestured towards a dark gray tabby who had his tail curled around his black paws. His deep green eyes seemed to be bored, and he acknowledged Jaypaw and Sunwatcher with a glance and a small "Hi." Jaypaw nodded back, giving him a smile that he halfheartedly returned. *Okay. So* he *doesn't exactly want to be best friends.*

"These are the StormClan medicine cats." Sunwatcher explained. "Those cats over there are the LakeClan medicine cats, Shellcloud and Streamspirit," he jerked his head towards a Siamese tom, and a slender silver tabby she cat. The she cat, Streamspirit, looked quite nice, laughing at something her mentor had said, and she seemed to be around Jaypaw's age. Probably older by a few moons. Shellcloud looked nicer too, and he was exchanging words with Oakfern. Jaypaw felt a small prick of uncertainty, however, because the wounds she had treated earlier had been because of LakeClan. But that wasn't the medicine cats' fault; they hadn't been in the fight. They had probably had to treat wounds today just like Jaypaw.

"And that is the BreezeClan medicine cat, Echosight." Sunwatcher said, flicking his tail towards a dark gray tabby tom. "He doesn't have an apprentice yet, but hopefully he will soon." Echosight looked more serious than the others, and acknowledged Jaypaw and Sunwatcher with a curt nod. "He's getting quite old." Sunwatcher added in a quieter tone, where the others didn't hear.

"It's nice to meet all of you!" Said Jaypaw to the group once they got closer.

"It's nice to meet you too, Jaypaw." said Streamspirit, smiling at her. She had a smooth, silky voice that made Jaypaw's ear fur tingle. "I think you'll be a great addition to our little medicine cat club here." Something told Jaypaw she was outgoing and brave.

"Let's get started, we're wasting moonlight!" Echosight huffed.

"Oh, alright, you grumpy old flea, let's begin." Said Oakfern, rolling her eyes but smiling with affection.

Sunwatcher stepped forward to get the other cats' attention before they started. "I am here to present my apprentice to StarClan." He said.

Jaypaw's heart skipped a beat. Her mind had been elsewhere while she was thinking about the other cats, and meeting them. The slender silver tabby Streamspirit had averted her attention.

Sunwatcher stepped forward, and tipped his head to the sky. "I, Sunwatcher, present my apprentice to you, StarClan. I pray that you accept her as you once accepted me." He lowered his head and turned to Jaypaw. "To speak to StarClan, you must lay a paw on the SilverTree. Like this." he curled up next to the tree, but shifted a paw so that it was touching the silver bark. "Or you can sleep with your nose touching it, whichever you prefer."

"Okay, I can do that." Said Jaypaw, half to herself, deciding to use her paw so she didn't scratch her nose. She got comfortable, laying beside the tree with a paw out, her pads pressed against the shimmering tree.

Together the medicine cats laid in a circle around the tree, paws out, except for Shellcloud and Echosight, who had their pink noses pressed against the bark. Jaypaw was squished in between Streamspirit and Sunwatcher, which she didn't mind, but it was a bit uncomfortable. She wasn't sure if they would be able to fit any more medicine cats around the tree; maybe there was room for one or two smaller cats.

The SilverTree felt... like power radiated off of it. Which it should, as StarClan's power was deep within it. As Jaypaw thought about it, wondering which StarClan cat she would hopefully see, she slipped into a peaceful sleep.

Jaypaw blinked opened her eyes, expecting to see soft green meadows and shimmering waters and starry cats, like the tales of StarClan portrayed, but instead found herself on the shore of- an ocean?

She stood in front of a big body of water, which was a deep, shadowy color, almost black, and the sand under her paws was light gray. It didn't feel like a StarClan beach, or even a normal one that the LakeClan cats could be seen frolicking around on. Jaypaw had never personally been to a beach, but she knew that the edge of LakeClan territory bordered one.

Jaypaw glanced up to the tree line. Maybe she was on the edge of StarClan? Did she have to pass some sort of gross, dark barrier to see her ancestors? She wished Sunwatcher would have given her some kind of warning. Or maybe it was a test, one that she had to be unaware of to pass.

The trees had brown, rotting leaves, if any, and the moss below was slimy and it looked almost as rotten as the trees. She looked left and right, but the beach was the same both ways- it seemed to stretch on forever. The fog that floated around all of it smelled of death and decay.

This isn't StarClan, for sure. Jaypaw turned in a circle, taking in her odd surroundings. The whole place seemed to be shrouded in shadows. *Where am I? What did I do wrong? How did I get here?*

Jaypaw suddenly had a horrifying realization. *Shadows, an ocean, decay and death, the opposite of StarClan.*

I'm in the Shadow Sea, aren't I?

Somehow, Jaypaw knew he was there before she saw him. She could feel a creeping sensation up her spine like she was being watched. She turned around, looking out at the blackened Sea

again, and outlined against the dark, deep waters, she saw his huge black and white pelted body, his cruel amber eyes.

When he spoke, it wasn't in her head this time.

"Hello, Jaypaw." Said Darkspirit. "I've been waiting for you."

Chapter 5

[image]

Jaypaw was surprised, to say the least. She'd never seen Darkspirit in person, except for that one instance when he'd briefly shown up to her in camp, but she didn't think that counted. He had been merely a vision of sorts, visible only to her for a split second. To send a message. Now, he was standing in front of her, and he didn't disappear when she blinked.

Somehow, Jaypaw felt no fear for him. When he had first shown up in her head, she had been scared, but now she was more adjusted to his presence. She only had one question for him. Well, she actually had a million questions, but only one that could only be answered by him.

"Darkspirit, what in StarClan's name do you want from me?"

"You know what I want." Darkspirit sneered.

"No, I don't think I do." Jaypaw retorted. She knew he wanted her to join him, but why? What would joining him in this evil place even mean?

"I already told you. I want you to train with me in the Shadow Sea. I could give you everything." he swished a claw through the gray sand. "You could rule the Clans with me. You would be such a valuable ally to me, and to all of the cats here who want vengeance for being treated so unfairly while they were alive." He turned his cold amber gaze on Jaypaw. "You could be the best fighter possible. Only if you join me. Forget healing cats, you could be the master of destruction here. I've seen your enthusiasm, your spirit. Power in return of a recruit- seems fair, doesn't it?" He turned toward the tree line. Jaypaw could see the faint outlines of spirit cats snaking through the dead trees.

"Why are you even searching for so much power?" She asked after a moment, wanting to know the cat's motivations. "What happened to

make you like this? So hateful towards the clans?"

Darkspirit's amber eyes turned to gaze out at the sea. "I was once a cat like you, Jaypaw. Thirsty for knowledge. I wanted to know everything, and I was willing to do what it took to learn." He flexed his claws in the gray sand. His pelt was black, except for a long white stripe that ran down his throat all the way to the end of his tail, which looked like it had been dipped in the clouds. He had another burst of white up his nose, and a scar that was stained a deep red ran along his jawline. "I wanted to be the greatest warrior the clans had ever seen. My foolish clanmates didn't listen to me. Not even my brother listened to me. They didn't understand that to know the forest was to know everything about all four clans within it, and to show them that you know their secrets." He gazed back at Jaypaw. His amber eyes were the only bright color she could see in this wretched place. "And now, I'm backed by all the cats who think the same as me. We could control all four forest clans, maybe even rule over StarClan one day."

"Rule over StarClan!" Jaypaw said in astonishment. "Are you crazy? What would a cat even *want* to do with all that power?"

Darkspirit smirked, and for a moment Jaypaw wished she had become a warrior so she knew the perfect move to give him a scar that would wipe away that smug smirk forever. "That's for me to know, and you to find out, if you join me."

She shook her gray head firmly. "I'm a medicine cat, not a warrior. I can't train with you. And even if I was a warrior, I wouldn't ever train with you. All you seem to want is power over the people that left you behind when you died." She felt her lip curl. "You're no better than a rogue. I assume that's why you're here?" she gestured toward the dark forest, the shadow sea. "This sure isn't StarClan. What even is this place? What's it for?" she turned in a circle again. "What did you do to get yourself put here? I assume it was something bad."

"Questions I would have answered if you agreed to join me. Now get out of my sight!" Darkspirit growled, narrowing his eyes and unsheathing his claws. Jaypaw got the feeling that if he struck, the wounds wouldn't just be in her imagination. The thought sent a

rush of fear through her, one that she really didn't like.

"With pleasure!" Jaypaw snarled. She was about to turn and flee from his shining claws when the ground shifted under her paws and the environment changed.

She reopened her eyes to see a forest, shining with stars and thick growth and smelling of sweet flowers. A rush of relief flooded through her body when she looked around, the peaceful, thriving area a great change of pace from the Shadow Sea. A tortoiseshell she cat strode up to Jaypaw. There were stars flashing and dancing in the cat's fur. *A StarClan cat!* Jaypaw thought. *I'm at StarClan now! Finally!*

"Hello Jaypaw." the StarClan cat purred. "I'm pleased to meet you."

"Who are you?" Jaypaw asked curiously. Her pelt was dark and flecked with many different shades of grey, white and brown, and she had amber eyes that were much warmer than Darkspirit's cold ones.

The StarClan cat swished her tail and replied. "My name is Drizzleheart. I was your mentor's mentor."

"You taught Sunwatcher?" Asked Jaypaw.

"Yes." Drizzleheart replied. "He was a good, kind apprentice. He was quiet and shy, but he paid attention and took good care of his clanmates. He has grown into a fine medicine cat." Drizzleheart sighed. "I do miss him. And I wish more cats were as compassionate as him."

She flicked her tail, and Jaypaw noticed she was slightly transparent. "Anyways, Jaypaw, I wanted to tell you that you made the right choice back there." Jaypaw's ears pricked in surprise. "You saw?"

"Yes, I saw. I was wondering what was taking your mind so long to reach here, and then I saw that that rat-brained scummy cat had his paws in your head. But you handled him well. You rejected unfair and cruel power with force, which is exactly what a real clan cat

would do."

Satisfaction spread through Jaypaw's pelt. "Anybody would have done the same."

"You'd be surprised." Drizzleheart replied sadly. "There are many that would take power over loyalty. Take Darkspirit, for example. I'm sure you'll hear his story one day, but the Clans don't like to talk about him much. He took quite the toll on ShadeClan and StormClan. I am very glad that you will never head down the same path as him." Her nose wrinkled at the mention of the cat's name.

"I hope that the rest of StarClan thinks the same good things about me that you do." Jaypaw said hopefully.

Drizzleheart flicked her ear. "StarClan accepts you, Jaypaw."

Jaypaw's heart leaped. "Really?"

Drizzleheart purred. "Of course. We wouldn't want any other cat training as a medicine cat in ShadeClan." Her yellow-orange eyes shone. "And I wouldn't want any other cat in Sunwatcher's place, after he joins us here. Which, hopefully, won't be very soon." she shook her head, clearing her thoughts; ones that seemed to reflect the conversation Jaypaw and Sunwatcher had earlier. "I have a prophecy for you, Jaypaw."

For me? "Why me? I'm just an apprentice!" Jaypaw said, her voice coming out higher than she would have liked. She cleared her throat so as to not seem so startled in front of the majestic StarClan cat. "No cat will believe me! You should give it to Sunwatcher instead."

"Calm down, young one. This prophecy was meant for you. And Sunwatcher has his own relationship with StarClan and its prophecies. He has dealt with them in good time. It's your turn now." Drizzleheart said. When Jaypaw nodded, she began to recite the prophecy.

"The Shadows are rising, and they will flow over the Clans, drowning many.

Rippling Echos will cause panic.

You may grow to fear the dark Raven.

The Shadows are Rising."

The last thing Jaypaw saw in her dreams before she woke were Drizzleheart's glowing orange eyes, and the medicine cat nodding to her.

Jaypaw jolted awake, her paw flicking away from the SilverTree. *What is all that supposed to mean?*

She saw that all the other medicine cats were still asleep, except for Streamspirit, who sat by a small creek in the clearing. "Finished?" she mewed. She was licking her paw and drawing it over her silver ears, cleaning herself.

Jaypaw shook out her pelt. "I guess."

Streamspirit smiled. "Did StarClan accept you?"

"Yeah, they did!" Jaypaw mewed happily, remembering Drizzleheart telling her that they wouldn't have wanted any other cat in the medicine cat position. She wished she had known her while she was alive.

"Did you meet a StarClan cat?" Streamspirit asked. "I mean, obviously, they had to accept you, but did one introduce themself?"

Jaypaw nodded.

"Cool. How do you like being a medicine cat so far?"

"I really like it. It's better than I thought it would be."

"Same. Hey, what do you say we have some fun while they're still asleep?" Streamspirit jerked her head towards the still medicine cats.

Jaypaw's pelt tingled with interest. "What should we do? Hopefully not anything that'll wake them, right?" She didn't want to get in

trouble, but she found herself wanting the silver she-cat's friendship.

Streamspirit grinned a mischievous grin. "Follow me."

She bounded through the ferns at the edge of the clearing, and Jaypaw ran off after her. "Are we gonna play a game?" Jaypaw asked when they were both in the small clearing behind the ferns. The words felt kind of silly coming out- she wasn't a kit anymore. But she would never say no to a good game.

"Have you ever played tag?" Streamspirit asked, her silver pelt glowing in the moonlight. She almost looked like a StarClan cat.

"No." Jaypaw answered. "What is it?"

"Okay, so to play tag, when you're it, you chase the other cat and tap them, and then they're it. Then they try to get you again, and it goes in a circle with everyone trying not to be it. You can play with a group of cats, but for now it's just us. Sound fun?"

"Yeah! Let's play!" Jaypaw was excited. Streamspirit seemed really cool, and she wanted to hang out with Jaypaw?

"Tag! You're it!" Streamspirit laughed and pawed Jaypaw right on the nose.

"Hey! I'm going to catch you!" Jaypaw said happily, but quietly as to not wake the other cats. She bounded over to Streamspirit and tapped her paw. "Got you!" Jaypaw yelped, scrambling away before Streamspirit could get her again.

***

"Whew! I'm tired!" Jaypaw collapsed on the ground, breathing heavily. "You win!"

"You're fast, though." Streamspirit said. "We should go back- they'll be awake soon." They both crawled back through the ferns.

"Hey, Streamspirit, when did you get your medicine cat name?" Jaypaw inquired. The she cat didn't seem much older than her, so

would Jaypaw be able to get her name so quickly?

"Last meeting, actually." She responded.

"Wow!" whispered Jaypaw. "I hope I get mine pretty quickly. I'm trying to learn really fast!"

Sunwatcher was stirring. Jaypaw laid down and waited patiently for him to wake up, watching his chest rise and fall. She remembered what Drizzleheart said, about how compassionate and kind Sunwatcher was. She was right; Jaypaw was lucky to have him as her mentor.

Once he was awake, he asked, "Did you see StarClan, Jaypaw?"

"Yeah! They accepted me and-"

Sunwatcher cut her off. "You're not supposed to share your visions with the other clans, Jaypaw." he said quietly. "It's not that we don't trust them, but we should just keep this kind of thing within our own clan."

But I talked to Streamspirit about it. Jaypaw thought guiltily. *I didn't tell her who talked to me, or that I got a prophecy, though.* With a jolt, she remembered. *The prophecy*! She had forgotten all about it in the excitement of her game with Streamspirit, and their newfound friendship. The last words of it replayed in her head.

The Shadows are Rising.

Chapter 6

[image]

Should I tell him?

Jaypaw's thought's whirled, still going after they left the SilverTree. As she padded into camp after Sunwatcher from the meeting, her mind was still on the ominous prophecy that Drizzleheart had given her. She wanted to tell someone, to get it out of her mind, but she didn't know who. She had never heard of an apprentice getting a prophecy this important- it almost never happened. At least, not that ShadeClan had heard of.

"Jaypaw! Hey, Jaypaw!!" Hazelkit's mew arose from the nursery. Hazelkit scrambled out, followed by Frostkit and Robinkit, her siblings. The litter of kits was getting quite big.

"Hey, Hazelkit." said Jaypaw, sitting down with a sigh. She almost wished to be one of them again, being carefree and having no responsibility. But she did love being an apprentice, and being taught the ways of a medicine cat.

"You're a true medicine cat apprentice now!" Robinkit squealed, her gray and brown pelt shining warmly in the soft, dappled sunlight in the center of camp.

Frostkit bounced around her, her white pelt speckled with gray flashing in Jaypaw's vision."You don't play with us anymore, Jaypaw." she said sadly, taking a seat in front of the apprentice.

Jaypaw felt guilty. These kits had been her best friends not long ago. She got a sudden idea. "Have you kits ever played tag?" she asked.

"No." Frostkit tipped her head to one side, her blue eyes matching Jaypaw's. "What's tag?"

"It's a game." Jaypaw said, smiling as she remembered her fun game

with Streamspirit. "The game begins with one cat who is it, and when they touch another cat, that cat is it. You try not to be it, and when you are it, you tag someone, and so forth. It's pretty fun, as long as you're fast!"

Jaypaw glowed a little when she saw the kits' excited looks. "I'll be it, and I'll count to three to let you kits run away and get a head start!" said Jaypaw. The kits squealed and ran away.

"One", Frostkit gave an excited bounce and ran farther across the camp.

"Two", Robinkit yelped and ran after Frostkit.

"Three!" Jaypaw dashed over to Hazelkit, who squeaked and pelted in the opposite direction, giggling.

Jaypaw reached out and cuffed Hazelkit's tail gently, claws sheathed. She turned and scrambled in the opposite direction, almost running into Frostkit and Robinkit, who yelped and bolted away.

Jaypaw heard someone call her name. "Jaypaw! Come over here!" It was Sunwatcher, and he didn't sound too happy.

Jaypaw padded over to him, her head low. "Jaypaw. You're not a kit anymore. You have to pay more attention to your duties. They matter a lot, more than any other ordinary apprentice."

"I'm sorry. I just haven't played with the kits in so long, and we used to be really good friends."

"You can play with the kits. Just not now." Sunwatcher didn't sound angry with her, but was instead patient.

Jaypaw looked up from the ground. "Okay."

"We need to discuss your meeting with StarClan." Sunwatcher sat down. "Did they tell you anything important?"

Oh, no. He won't believe me. I'm just an apprentice. I shouldn't get prophecies before I'm made into a full medicine cat, I bet. Maybe it was

just a bad dream. Maybe I'm just fooling myself.

But should I tell him? Someone should know. What if the clans are in danger?

No. He won't believe me. I've never heard of an apprentice as young as me getting a prophecy! Maybe he'll make me stop being a medicine cat apprentice, if I'm not normal and I'm getting prophecies too soon. If it gets serious, I'll tell him about the prophecy and Darkspirit. I'll tell him about Drizzleheart, though. She'd want him to know.

"A cat named Drizzleheart came into my dreams." Jaypaw saw a flicker of recognition and sadness in Sunwatcher's eyes. "She said StarClan accepted me as a medicine cat. She said she was your-"

"Mentor." Sunwatcher's eyes glimmered. "Yes, Drizzleheart was my mentor; I couldn't have wished for a better one. She was kind and wise... a fantastic medicine cat." he drifted off. "Jaypaw, could you re-dress Thunderheart's wound please? I... I need some time to think. I'm going to gather herbs." and with that, Sunwatcher swept out of the den, the faraway look still in his eyes. Drizzleheart had clearly meant a lot to him, and if his admiration for her was anything close to the amount that Jaypaw respected him, she understood why he missed her.

She would miss him too, one day.

She hoped that the clans were safe, and that day wouldn't come too soon.

I'll tell him soon. I just need to figure out what it all means. Maybe then the others will believe me.

Chaper 7

[image]

Ravenpaw dropped his prey on the fresh kill pile, exhausted from hunting. Good exhausted, though; he had been successful, taking down two mice, a blackbird, and a shrew. He turned his head to see Jaypaw walking out of the medicine den, on her way to the elders.

Ravenpaw felt guilty for not talking to Jaypaw lately. They were siblings after all. They didn't get a lot of time together- they didn't even sleep in the same den anymore. He decided to go talk to her, just to see what was going on with her training lately and how her SilverTree meeting had gone last night. He knew it was a big deal, getting to speak to StarClan. He found himself really wanting to know more; Ravenpaw did love a good story, after all. He hoped he would be a warrior that the elders could tell stories about one day.

Him and Jaypaw had been extremely close as kits. While he didn't play much with all the other kits, Jaypaw and him had sometimes played their own separate games, being the oldest kits in the nursery. The biggest thing that had separated them was sleep, which Ravenpaw had enjoyed much more of compared to his sister. He could remember them sneaking around camp together when they were tiny, the way he would cuff her fluffy black-tipped ears when she would be too loud and spoil their explorations, getting them caught.

"Hey, Jaypaw?" Ravenpaw called into the elders' den. "What're you doing in here?"

Jaypaw turned around, and her eyes lit with surprise. "Ravenpaw! I haven't seen you in a little while! Well, I've *seen* you, just not hung out with you or anything. I'm helping the elders."

"I wanted to catch up with you." Ravenpaw said. "It's been awhile since we just chatted about training. And, just, everything."

"Yeah. I'll talk when I'm done, okay?" Jaypaw flicked her tail at

Storktail, who was itching at a spot near the base of his tail.

"Jaypaw! We need some mouse bile over here." he groaned.

"Coming!" and with that Ravenpaw trotted out of the den, and picked out a nice juicy thrush for the siblings to share off of the fresh kill pile. He saw with satisfaction that it was mostly full, thanks to his hunting patrol with Tigercloud and Dawnlight. Tigerclaw had trotted off to the nursery to see his mate, Lynxfur, and his two kits, Blackkit and Heatherkit.

Ravenpaw bit into the thrush. It thankfully was still warm; it must have been from the hunting patrol he was on. After he had swallowed a few more delicious bites- he hadn't realized how hungry she had gotten from the patrol- Jaypaw came out of the den, looking quite tired.

"What, you didn't even wait on me?" She said in mock sarcasm. "I need to go wash my paws in the stream. Leave at least *some* of that thrush for me, won't you?" Jaypaw said as Ravenpaw leaned down to take another bite of thrush.

"I might! You'll have to hurry up." Ravenpaw said, and he giggled a little as Jaypaw shot a glare at him.

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Jaypaw settled down on the other side of the thrush, taking a bite of her share. "So how's training?" Jaypaw asked with a mouthful of the meat.

"Oh, it's fine. Dawnlight is a good mentor." Ravenpaw replied. "But it is kind of lonely, though. It's weird that I'm the only apprentice. I'll be happier when Frostkit, Hazelkit, and Robinkit are apprenticed. Dawnlight says I'm doing really well." There was a glimmer of pride in Ravenpaw's eyes. "She said I might have my warrior ceremony earlier than most."

Jaypaw shot him an impressed look, swallowing her bite of thrush. "I'd have thought you liked the lonely apprentice den, you brooding furball."

Ravenpaw shrugged. "I guess not. It gets a little too quiet sometimes." He found himself really wishing they shared a den. "How's your training going, Jaypaw?" he asked.

Jaypaw tensed. Ravenpaw thought worriedly, *is something wrong?* But Jaypaw quickly loosened up and smiled.

"It's great. I love being a medicine cat. Healing the clan makes me feel... like I belong. Like I have a purpose, you know? Not that training as a warrior is bad, but it's not for me. Just like a medicine cat is not for you." she responded.

But some sort of shadow seemed to hang around Jaypaw. *Did something happen? Something that she doesn't want the rest of the clan to know?*

Jaypaw suddenly turned to Ravenpaw after her next bite of thrush, her eyes darkening with worry again. "Ravenpaw, can I trust you with something?" Her voice was muffled with meat from the prey.

The question caught him off guard. *Trust? What does she need to trust me with?* Ravenpaw answered hesitantly. "Of course, Jaypaw...what do you need to trust me with?" She could tell him anything, but he didn't want her to tell him something he shouldn't know. "After you swallow your bite, so you don't choke."

"I got a prophecy at the half moon meeting." Jaypaw said after swallowing. Ravenpaw's deep blue eyes widened, but before he could say anything, Jaypaw continued.

"The prophecy was about... something shadowy. I don't know what it means, but I think that it's going to be bad; it said that the shadows are rising. It said they will flow over the clans and drown many. Rippling echoes will cause panic, and you may grow to fear the..." Jaypaw trailed off, and her eyes grew wide when looking at Ravenpaw. She'd seemed to think of something, something that scared her.

Ravenpaw felt bad- had he made a weird facial expression? Did she feel unsafe around him? He wanted to understand, but he didn't know much about prophecies, or medicine cat stuff or any of it. Or

about other cat's emotions. He struggled with the last one a lot.

"The what?" Ravenpaw asked, urging her to keep talking. "The Raven." Jaypaw said. Fear sparked in her eyes and she backed away, across the clearing and into the medicine den. "I'm sorry..." she said. "But I have to stay away from you until I can be sure that's not what the prophecy means. I'm already nervous that something's going to go wrong, and I just... I need to know more. I'm sorry, Ravenpaw. I want to figure this out."

He didn't understand- did she think the prophecy was about him? Did she think that he was going to cause destruction to the clans? It hurt that she would think that he would do that, even in a prophecy. Maybe fearing the Raven didn't mean him? Ravenpaw knew that he wouldn't do anything to cause the forest to be overtaken by some dark force.

Jaypaw turned and ran away into the den, leaving Ravenpaw feeling lonelier and more afraid than he had ever felt.

Chapter 8

[image]

Guilt flooded over Jaypaw as she watched Ravenpaw's black form slinking sadly back into the apprentices' den. She wanted him to be safe, she wanted Sunwatcher to be safe, she wanted to figure out this prophecy! Jaypaw was lost and confused, wishing that Drizzleheart had given her more information. Why did StarClan have to be poetic? Why couldn't they be more clear?

It began to sink into her how selfish she'd been. Pushing another cat away because she didn't want to get herself hurt, because she was worried about some cryptic prophecy especially with him being her brother- how must Ravenpaw feel now? She wanted to let him into the prophecy- but if the Raven line was about him, she couldn't. What if he was going to do something terrible?

But he's your brother. Of course he's hurt that he was the first thing you thought of when you get a dark prophecy. I have to apologize to him. Jaypaw thought. *I have to tell him that I didn't mean what I said, that I was just scared.*

The line was about growing to fear the Raven, and maybe she foolishly already had before he'd done anything wrong.

Jaypaw turned to Thunderheart, who was still in the medicine den. He was awake, and his eyes were clear. The wound was almost gone, leaving not much except for a pink scar that separated his fur. "Hey, Jaypaw! Do you think I could move out of the medicine den and go back to warrior duties now? It's getting really boring in here. Not that you and Sunwatcher aren't fun cats, but I miss being a warrior." he smiled at her.

Jaypaw used her medicine cat knowledge and ran her paw over the closed wound. No swelling, no redness, no sour smell of infection. It looked pretty much healed. "I think you should be free to go. But you'd best check with Sunwatcher first." Jaypaw replied. She was feeling a little unsure of herself at the moment. All she could think

about was Ravenpaw.

"Great! Where is he?" Thunderheart asked.

"He's probably collecting herbs. I'll look for him."

Jaypaw left the medicine den, glancing towards the apprentices den where she knew her brother resided. *I'll talk to Ravenpaw when I get back. I need to apologize.*

Jaypaw saw Duskblaze, the deputy, eating a mouse by the entrance of the camp, her orange pelt glowing in the sun. Jaypaw padded over to the tabby she cat, feeling a little bad about interrupting her meal. "Hey, Duskblaze. Have you seen Sunwatcher?" Jaypaw asked.

"I think he went out to gather herbs." Duskblaze responded. "He shouldn't be too far."

Jaypaw nodded and walked out of camp. "Thanks." Duskblaze nodded, going back to her mouse.

Jaypaw padded over to the best spot to find marigold; they were short on it after Thunderheart's wound, so he was probably looking for some. She sniffed around, catching Sunwatcher's scent- he must be close by. But none of the marigold leaves had been picked; the plants looked good as new.

"Sunwatcher?" Jaypaw called through the trees. "I need to ask you something!" Jaypaw inhaled again, catching a different, more metallic scent.

I must be smelling wrong- why would I smell blood here?

Jaypaw crept through the pine forest, thankful for the feeling of tranquility and shelter that they provided, with the dimness and the soft bed of good-smelling needles under her feet from the trees above. The familiarity did make her feel safer, even though her stomach was now churning with butterflies of fear. Where was her mentor?

A groan of pain sounded not far ahead, and Jaypaw whipped her head around, her ears flicking.

She saw Sunwatcher's golden pelt shimmering in the faint light of the forest, but there was blood streaked through it, interrupting the yellow stripes. *What happened?* She thought frantically. *Is he okay?*

Jaypaw dashed to Sunwatcher's side, gently running her paw over his pelt, looking for the wound so she could help, so she could fix whatever had happened. She located it on the side of his stomach; it was deep, which was not good at all. She saw that his eyes were barely open, and he was slipping in and out of consciousness.

"Sunwatcher, what happened?" Jaypaw exclaimed, unable to hide the fear in her voice. "Who did this?"

"I was... ambushed... dark... dark cat... many cats..."

Jaypaw's mind raced. She inhaled deeply, trying to figure it out-seeing if she could pick up on something. As she did, Sunwatcher slipped into unconsciousness, still faintly stuttering about the dark cats. She quickly licked some of the blood off his muzzle, seeing that there were more minor cuts and scratches along his body. It was okay, she could deal with this. Her training had been going on for almost a moon now. She knew what to do. Cobwebs first. Stop the bleeding.

Another scent caught Jaypaw's attention... but how could it be? This wasn't a dream... So why was she catching the foul scent of the Shadow Sea?

Chapter 9

[image]

Jaypaw's mind reeled as she scanned the pine trees for cobwebs. *I must be imagining it. That or I really* am *crazy.* Why had she faintly caught the scent of the Shadow Sea? The cats there were dead. Their spirits couldn't appear in the world to hurt cats. Surely that wasn't possible. If it was, StarClan cats would be wandering around for visits all the time, right?

She found a thick wad of cobwebs strung along a low hanging branch, and proceeded to plaster them over Sunwatcher's wound. The speed at which the cobwebs turned red made her very anxious, and if her paws weren't inky black she was sure they would be bright red too.

Jaypaw turned in a circle to see if there were any ShadeClan patrols nearby. She didn't see any, and she was further from camp than she would have liked to be.

She glanced at Sunwatcher, who was still out cold. She couldn't carry him back alone; she cursed her small stature. *I could run back to camp- I'd have to be fast, though.* Jaypaw hated running, but she'd do it to save Sunwatcher. She couldn't just leave him out here, to possibly die. Running around to look for cobwebs and herbs out here would take too long, in comparison to the medicine den, where she had everything she needed.

"I'll be back, Sunwatcher, right back." Jaypaw gathered her breath, and took off straight for camp, running as fast as she could, ignoring her wheezing. She felt the moss and pine needles smush gently under her paws as she bolted toward camp. She stopped for a lap or two of water in a nearby puddle, but kept on running until she saw the camp entrance ahead. She stepped through the pine needle barrier and nearly collapsed, panting.

"Jaypaw! What happened?"

Duskblaze was standing to the side of the camp entrance, where Jaypaw had seen her before she'd left camp, with what looked to be a hunting patrol about to leave. Jaypaw noticed uncomfortably that Ravenpaw was in this patrol- hadn't he just been on one, anyway? *Overachiever.*

But that didn't matter right now. "It's Sunwatcher! He's.." she stopped to take a big breath in. "He's really hurt, and he's far away from camp. I need your help so I can bring him back and treat him."

Duskblaze's green eyes lit in surprise. "Lead the way, Jaypaw."

Jaypaw turned and began to slowly run, picking up her pace as she ran to where Sunwatcher had been injured. She heard two sets of paws behind her- Duskblaze's, and probably another warrior. She didn't turn around to look, her only focus being helping her mentor. The sharp scent of blood rose again in her throat as she spotted Sunwatcher's golden tabby pelt, streaked with red.

She turned around to Duskblaze and, surprisingly, Ravenpaw. She shook out her pelt from running, trying to disguise how much it exhausted her. "C'mon, let's carry him back to camp!" Jaypaw said urgently.

Together, they all nosed under Sunwatcher and took extra care to avoid the wound, which Jaypaw had stuck another layer of cobwebs on.

They were in a line with Sunwatcher laying on top of them, and slowly, they began the long trek back to camp. Sunwatcher was lighter than Jaypaw would have thought, despite the fact that he was such a big cat. A lot of it was probably just his long fluffy fur.

"Can you two handle him for a moment? I might as well re-mark the LakeClan border while we're right here." Duskblaze asked. When the two apprentices murmured that they could, Duskblaze quickly dashed to the border while the two continued towards the camp.

Jaypaw was awkwardly squashed beside Ravenpaw, the two of them each holding up more weight now. He shot her a glare, and she could feel the tension in the air between them. You could've

sliced it with a claw. "Ravenpaw," she hissed. "I'm *sorry,* okay? I didn't mean to push you away like that. I was scared, that's all. I don't know what to think of this prophecy stuff yet. I know it was selfish of me to be so mean, but can you forgive me?"

Ravenpaw seemed to register what she said for a moment before scowling at her. "No, Jaypaw. I *can't* forgive you. For many reasons. One of them being that you pushed me away based on a prophecy that could be just a dream. Apprentices never get prophecies, so why should you?"

Jaypaw looked down at the pine needles below them. "Speaking of that, how do you even *know* it was a real prophecy? Maybe you're *not* supposed to be a medicine cat. Maybe you're just wrong. Are you only trying to be a medicine cat to prove that you're better than the rest of the apprentices or something? So that you can be StarClan's favorite?"

And that, that made Jaypaw angry. "It *was* a dream from StarClan!" She snarled, her shoulder fur rising, only to be squashed by Sunwatcher, who was still unconscious. "And who says I'm not supposed to be a medicine cat? I can be what I want, for *me*, and I don't need *you* getting in the way! Prophecy or not!" Jaypaw let out a huff.

"I don't want to be hurt anymore by you! Or by anyone else! Just... just go hang out with someone else, Jaypaw. What's the point in being close to cats if they're only bound to push you away and think bad things about you?" Ravenpaw's voice trembled.

"I'm not trying to push you away! I just want to apologize. You're my brother!"

"Forget it, Jaypaw."

Was something else going on with him? Did he have any other worries? He had said he might be given his warrior ceremony early, so he must be working really hard. Maybe he was tired. Another wave of guilt crashed over Jaypaw. She didn't want to be the cause of Ravenpaw's sadness; maybe she could try talking to him again, in the future.

But now, they both needed time to cool down.

Chapter 10

[image]

"I welcome you into the Clan as apprentices, Hazelpaw, Frostpaw, Robinpaw, and Alderpaw." The Clan cheered their names, and the four new apprentices glowed with pride. Stormfeather and Dovepelt affectionately licked their kit, Alderpaw, who laughed and shook them off. He was growing to be quite big already.

"Hazelpaw! Frostpaw! Robinpaw! Alderpaw!" Jaypaw cheered with them, happy for her cousin, Alderpaw, and the kits she had grown up with. Their mentors were Bounceleap with Alderpaw, Icefur with Frostpaw, Firefrost with Hazelpaw, and Skyrunner with Robinpaw.

"And with that." Twigstar continued. "The cats going to the gathering are.."

The gathering! Jaypaw had nearly forgotten. She was going to see all of the other clans today! She'd met them at the SilverTree, but that was just the medicine cats. Her mind had been so busy with the prophecy and worrying about Ravenpaw and Sunwatcher that the meeting had slipped her mind today. Sunwatcher was healing well, unlike her relationship with Ravenpaw. The black tom had been avoiding her ever since their unfortunate encounter half a moon ago.

"Duskblaze, Dawnlight, Driftbreeze, Swiftfall, Thunderheart, Echosplash, Stonewish, Troutstripe," she started. Troutstripe had become an elder in the past half moon, being with his mate, Stonewish again. The two had been parents to Echosplash, Jaypaw's mother, and Dovepelt. "Jaypaw, and Ravenpaw."

Jaypaw realized that she would be going to the gathering as the solo medicine cat of ShadeClan. She would have to represent Sunwatcher, who was now awake, but his wound was deep, and the cause was still mostly a mystery. Jaypaw had a bad feeling that it somehow was connected to the dark cats of the Shadow Sea. She shivered at the thought of Darkspirit, and the other cats he had

following him. She hadn't seen any during the time they'd met, but she assumed they were just as cruel if they could end up in a place like the Shadow Sea.

"When should we start to leave, Twigstar?" Asked Duskblaze, standing up tall.

"Right about now, I would say." Said Twigstar, green eyes shining in the light of the setting sun. "Cats who are going to the gathering, follow us!"

The sun was soon all the way set, the moon beginning to rise. It was full and bright.

Jaypaw remembered staying up on the full moon nights secretly, with Ravenkit, looking for the shining globe, and knowing that over time, when they counted six full moons, they would be apprentices.

As Jaypaw watched Dawnlight and Ravenpaw leave the camp, she began to feel nervousness prickle at her paws. She was going to be introduced to the clans alone. With Ravenpaw, of course, but, well, their terms weren't the *best* at the moment. Their whispered argument had caused... not a *rivalry* between the siblings, but they were certainly angry with each other.

Sunwatcher poked his head out of the medicine den. "Can I go now?" Came a muffled voice from the back of the medicine den.

Sunwatcher gave a smile, sighing. "*Yes*, Thunderheart, you can go." Thunderheart bounded confidently out of the den, shook out his thick fur, and dashed over to the entrance of camp with the others who were attending the gathering. He eagerly chatted with Dawnlight, alternating his paws on the ground like he couldn't wait to run.

Sunwatcher beckoned his apprentice from the entrance to the den. When Jaypaw padded over, he said to her, "Do not feel intimidated by the other Clans. You are a strong apprentice, and I fully trust you to represent me at the gathering tonight. You have nothing to be afraid of."

She nodded. "I'll do my best, Sunwatcher." she said. Jaypaw padded over to the entrance of the camp, avoiding Ravenpaw's sapphire gaze.

"Alright, ShadeClan, we're wasting moonlight! Let's go to the gathering!" Twigstar began to lead the Clan from the camp to the Great Pine, where the gatherings were held. Jaypaw's paws tingled with a mixture of excitement and nervousness.

They followed Twigstar to the gathering, creeping through the pine woods to the center of the clan territory, where the Great Pine was. She scented that two Clans were already there, LakeClan and BreezeClan. Jaypaw recognized their leaders from what she had heard- Spotstar and Bristlestar. Spotstar was tall and muscular, the multicolored spots on his pelt making it look like someone had sprinkled bits of the forest all over him. Bristlestar was smaller, her blue gray pelt glistening in the moonlight. Her tail was wrapped around her white paws as she exchanged words with Spotstar.

Jaypaw noticed her mother immediately rushing over to talk to a tall LakeClan cat. *Probably a friend of hers.* Jaypaw thought. She made her way over to a group of apprentices from LakeClan and BreezeClan, trying to figure out what they were talking about and debating on introducing herself. She had never been around so many cats in her whole life before.

There was a small gray she cat apprentice that seemed to be telling a story that involved a lot of battle moves, as she was jumping around.

"And *then*", the gray apprentice continued. "I slashed it's muzzle! Like *this!*" The apprentice slashed a paw through the air, claws unsheathed. She got a couple of uneasy glances from surrounding LakeClan and ShadeClan cats, and a warrior of BreezeClan saw- likely her mentor, as she snapped, "Mintpaw! We don't unsheathe our claws at a gathering! I know this is your first one, but calm down!"

The apprentice, Mintpaw, sighed. "Okay, Juniperheart." She mumbled. Then she caught sight of Jaypaw. "Hey! You! Gray she cat with the pretty blue eyes! C'mere, you wanna hear my story of

how I fought a big huge *dog*!?" Juniperheart whirled back around and gave Mintpaw a warning look.

"My *clawless* story of how I fought a dog?" Mintpaw said innocently. Juniperheart turned back around with a small huff of amusement.

"Haha, clawless, get it? Like *flaw*less, but *claw*less?" Mintpaw said.

"Yeah, I get it. I'm Jaypaw, I'm training as ShadeClan's medicine cat. But unless you'd like to hear a boring story about healing, I'd like to hear yours." she said politely. She repeated Sunwatcher's words in her head- *do not be intimidated by the other clans.*

Mintpaw and the other two apprentices laughed. "I like you, you're funny." Mintpaw said. "These are my new friends from LakeClan." She gestured towards the other apprentices, both of which were taller than the fluffy gray spotted apprentice by a little bit. Mintpaw was a fair gray like Twigstar, with green eyes that must have earned her her name, and she was covered in darker gray spots.

"I'm Rosepaw." One of the apprentices said. She had long, cream colored fur, with pale yellow eyes. "This is my brother, Dewpaw." The other apprentice was a tom, and he was white with gray splotches covering his body. His eyes were green like Mintpaw's, but more of a leafy green instead of bright green.

As Mintpaw went on about her dog fight, another apprentice approached them slowly, from behind Mintpaw. She was black, with amber eyes. She crept up on Mintpaw, but she saw Jaypaw watching her. She winked at Jaypaw with one of her big eyes, and just as Mintpaw sat up, finishing her story, the black apprentice pounced on her.

"Aughhhh! Littlepaw!" Mintpaw mumbled as the black apprentice, Littlepaw, tackled her. "I... win!" Yelped Littlepaw triumphantly as she got Mintpaw pinned to the ground.

There was the sound of a cat clearing their throat, and the two scrambling apprentices turned to see Juniperheart glaring at them. She raised one eyebrow, and both apprentices immediately sat up, and Mintpaw began to lick one paw and draw it over her head.

Littlepaw smacked her in the head with her paw and mouthed 'too far!'

Juniperheart nodded and turned back to her conversation. Mintpaw turned back to hers and said "Do any of you have littermates? Because they're *super annoy-* ouch!" She said as Littlepaw smacked her head again.

"I mean...we're siblings, duh." Said Dewpaw, gesturing to Rosepaw with a paw." His green eyes flicked to Jaypaw for a moment and then he looked away. *Huh,* thought Jaypaw. *Weird.*

"I have a sibling." Said Jaypaw. "He's Ravenpaw. He's over there. The black tom with the darkish blue eyes. He's really grumpy." Ravenpaw was sitting with their mother, and was also talking to the LakeClan tom. Ravenpaw looked...

Well, Ravenpaw looked happy. Happier than when he was in camp, at least. He laughed at one of the LakeClan tom's jokes. "Dewpaw... who is that tom Ravenpaw's talking to?"

Dewpaw seemed almost startled to be addressed. "Oh, that's my mentor, Ripplemist."

"Wow, look at that. No *warrior* from other clans wants to talk to *me."* Mintpaw mumbled. "Hey, they look kind of similar. And Ripplemist has your eyes, Jaypaw."

Jaypaw didn't like to admit it, but Mintpaw was right. The curve of Ravenpaw's face matched Ripplemist's, and the shape of their eyes was the same. They were also both tall; Ravenpaw wasn't his height yet, but he was growing. Unfortunately, Jaypaw was not.

Something about the word *ripple*, just stirred something in her mind. *Why is that familiar?*

Then she remembered.

The prophecy! Rippling Echoes will cause panic in the clans!

Rippling *echoes*... Ripplemist and Echosplash... her mother... could it be? The thought made her momentarily dizzy. The two cats were

looking at each other fondly, more fondly than any other two cats Jaypaw could see in the clearing.

Could Ripplemist be.... her father?

Chapter 11

[image]

"Hey, Jaypaw, are you okay?" Rosepaw's voice broke into her discovery.

"Yeah, Rosepaw, I'm okay. I just had a thought." It wasn't exactly lying. Out of the corner of her eye, Jaypaw saw a large group of cats pouring into the clearing. StormClan!

"Finally!" mumbled Jaypaw and Mintpaw at the same time. They purred with laughter.

"Let all cats gather to hear news from all Clans!" Came Spotstar's deep voice from the thickest branch in the Great Pine.

"I'm going to go sit with the medicine cats now." Jaypaw said to the other apprentices. She padded over to Streamspirit, Shellcloud, Echosight, Oakfern, and Swallowsight.

"Hello, Jaypaw, and welcome to your first gathering!" Said Oakfern quietly. "Where's Sunwatcher?"

"He had to stay at camp, he got really hurt in the woods. But he'll be here at the next gathering. He's recovering quickly." Jaypaw sat up a bit straighter. It *was* her care that was making him better, after all. And she didn't want the other clans doubting Sunwatcher's strength. He was a strong cat; she was sure he would make a full recovery.

The medicine cats turned their heads to see what Spotstar was saying. "Life in LakeClan is good. The lake is full of plump fish, and we have two new apprentices, Rosepaw and Dewpaw!"

The surrounding cats began to chant. "Rosepaw! Dewpaw!" Jaypaw turned to see Rosepaw and Dewpaw turning away, shyly but happily.

"Their training is going well, mentored by Jaggedstripe and Ripplemist. I trust they will be great warriors in the future."

Twigstar stepped forward, her proud gray figure confidently casting a shadow over the cats directly below the rock. "Things are well in ShadeClan. We have four new apprentices this moon, and two who have not been introduced from last moon. Our dens are filling quickly!" The surrounding cats gave light purrs of laughter. "Join me in welcoming Ravenpaw, Jaypaw, Hazelpaw, Frostpaw, Robinpaw and Alderpaw into the Clans!"

After all the Clans chanted their names, Twigstar flicked her tail for silence. "Jaypaw has chosen to follow the path of a medicine cat. Our senior medicine cat, Sunwatcher, is not here tonight. He has been attacked by an unknown cat in the forest, but thanks to the care of our medicine cat apprentice, he is recovering." Twigstar gave her an approving glance.

The Clans shot a few admiring looks at Jaypaw and murmured amongst themselves before Twigstar waved her tail for silence again. Jaypaw smiled at the unfamiliar cats, not wanting any enemies in other clans.

"Though there is something I'd like to address." Twigstar turned, her emerald green eyes meeting Spotstar's amber ones." "Spotstar, your warriors attacked mine about a moon ago on a border patrol. Care to explain?"

Spotstar remained completely calm, unflinching. "Well, Twigstar, I was just about to ask you the same thing. What were *your* warriors doing on *our* territory?"

Twigstar's eyes displayed obvious shock. "My warriors? On your territory? Spotstar, the way I heard it, it was *your* warriors on *my* territory." A spark of anger joined the fading surprise in her eyes.

"Twigstar, our warriors scented yours by our border quite a few moons ago. We didn't say anything, but now it seems like there is something going on. Our warriors, again, scented yours on the border recently, and then the next day, met them on a border patrol and decided to ask. That is, before they were attacked. Do *you* care

to explain?" Spotstar asked, still calm. Jaypaw admired his composition. She didn't know if she could speak in front of that many cats; the leaders were all brave.

Twigstar's eyes returned to a surprised look, which she quickly changed to not give away her emotions. She turned to her warriors. "Is what he says true?" she said to the warriors who were on the patrol. "Did you attack first?"

Thunderheart looked down at his paws. "We had to." He mumbled. "They were calling us prey stealers. And we tried to tell them we weren't, Twigstar, we really did." He licked his chest in embarrassment. Jaypaw couldn't help but feel bad for the gray warrior; he had been the one who was injured the worst in the border dispute.

"But was it necessary to start a fight?" She asked. Her eyes were disappointed now. "We'll discuss this when we get home." Twigstar shook her head. "ShadeClan gives its apologies for the rash actions of its warriors, Spotstar." She backed away and nodded her head to Deerstar of StormClan, letting her step up and speak.

Before the leader started talking, Jaypaw noticed Echosplash and Ripplemist each shoot the other a guilty look, encouraging her suspicions.

Deerstar's spotted brown and white pelt glistened in the moonlight. "StormClan is..." She began, but sadness glistened in her eyes, and she paused momentarily. "In the recent half moon, a Twoleg monster pulled up to our camp and took some of our cats." Deerstar bowed her head. "Most of us managed to escape....but they got Badgerclaw, Toadspring, and Rabbitspring. We have found a place to build a new camp, and we are hoping to be rebuilt in the next few moons."

Deerstar sighed. *She's getting old,* Jaypaw thought. The short furred she cat had been leader for many moons, since long before Jaypaw was born.

There were a few murmurs of sadness throughout the Clans, from the friends of Badgerclaw, Toadspring, and Rabbitspring. Jaypaw

saw the deputy of StormClan, Sparkflight, give Deerstar a concerned look, his ginger pelt with white specks glinting in the moonlight.

She must be on her last life, Jaypaw thought. Something made her very certain, like an instinct. Then Jaypaw remembered a scenario from her very early kithood. Jaykit had been no older than a moon and a half when it had occurred...

"Will she get any better?" a murmur came from the medicine den.

"I don't think so." Sunwatcher's voice drifted to Jaykit and Ravenkit's hiding place outside the den. Jaykit and Ravenkit shared a horrified glance. Briarstar was... dying?

"She's on her last life, isn't she?" Twigleap's sad but understanding voice came from the den.

Jaykit peeked through the brambles and saw Sunwatcher nod.

"How do you know?" Twigleap asked.

"A medicine cat always knows." Sunwatcher said to her simply.

Jaykit gazed at him in awe. What a good medicine cat!

It is an instinct, then. Jaypaw thought, her mind in the present now. *Deerstar is on her last life.*

Deerstar jumped to a lower branch on the tree. Bristlestar of BreezeClan came up to the top branch and looked out across the Clans. Bristlestar was small in stature, but she made up for it by being a strong, confident leader.

"The prey is running well in BreezeClan. Quite fast, actually." she purred, and there were a few chuckles in the crowd. "BreezeClan also has two new apprentices, Mintpaw and Littlepaw. The Clans cheered, and Jaypaw cheered particularly loudly for her new friends.

"Recently, BreezeClan camp was attacked by a dog, but we fended it off with the help of our newest apprentices." Mintpaw's small figure straightened and looked around at the few cats looking at her,

impressed, with a '*Yeah, I helped beat a dog!*' look.

"I think that's all from BreezeClan." Bristlestar jumped down from the Great Pine.

"I apologize, fellow Clans, but ShadeClan needs to go home and discuss what has been said here tonight." Twigstar threw a meaningful look at Spotstar. "Until the next gathering, may StarClan light your paths."

Jaypaw padded over to the other apprentices and said her goodbyes, then rejoined ShadeClan, which was breaking off into their group to go home. Jaypaw looked over to see Echosplah and Ravenpaw waving their tails in a 'see you next time!' way to Ripplemist.

Ravenpaw turned and, surprisingly, his eyes lit up when he saw Jaypaw. Maybe not in a happy way, but a 'I need to talk to you' way. He flicked his tail, and Jaypaw padded over to him.

Echosplash and the rest of ShadeClan exited the gathering clearing, with Jaypaw and Ravenpaw at the rear. Ravenpaw said to Jaypaw, "I might be mad at you, Jaypaw... but you're my sister, and there's something you need to know."

"What is it, Ravenpaw?" curiosity churned in Jaypaw's stomach, along with eagerness to talk to her brother again. Just before Ravenpaw spoke, Jaypaw knew exactly what he would say.

"Jaypaw, I just met our father."

Allegiences Update #1

[image]

(Some designs will be slightly altered in this btw)

ShadeClan

LEADER- Twigstar- she-cat- gray furred

DEPUTY- Duskblaze- she cat- ginger tabby

MEDICINE CATS- Sunwatcher- tom- golden tabby, white paws

Apprentice, Jaypaw

WARRIORS-

Bounceleap- tom- ginger tabby **Apprentice, Alderpaw**

Snowflame- she-cat- white pelt

Firefrost- she cat- white with ginger ears, paws, and tail tip **Apprentice, Hazelpaw**

Icefur- tom- white pelt **Apprentice, Frostpaw**

Stormfeather- tom- dark gray

Dawnlight- she-cat- light ginger **Apprentice, Ravenpaw**

Lionpounce- tom- long furred golden tabby

Tawnyshade- she-cat- tortoiseshell with black paws

Troutstripe- tom- gray/brown tabby

Thunderheart- tom- thick gray pelt

Alderclaw- tom- dark ginger with white splotch on chest

Skyrunner- she-cat- dark ginger tabby **Apprentice, Robinpaw**

Driftbreeze- she-cat- brown tabby

Swiftfall- she-cat- light brown tabby

Tigercloud- tom- dark brown tabby with white paws, belly, and chest

Echosplash - she-cat- very dark gray tabby

Dovepelt- she-cat- light gray tabby with unique purple eyes

Silversky- she-cat- silver pelt

QUEENS-

Lynxfur- she-cat- mother to Blackkit (black tabby tom) and Heatherkit (light brown she-cat)

ELDERS-

Storktail- tom- white with brown spots

Stonewish- she-cat- gray tabby

APPRENTICES-

Jaypaw- she cat- gray tabby with white paws

Ravenpaw- tom- black furred

Alderpaw- tom- deep ginger pelt

Hazelpaw- she cat- tan tabby

Frostpaw- she cat- white with light gray spots

Robinpaw- she cat- gray/brown tabby

LakeClan

LEADER- Spotstar- tom- white pelt with multicolored spots

DEPUTY- Reedslip- tom- gray/brown tabby

MEDICINE CATS- Shellcloud**-** tom- Siamese

Streamspirit- she-cat- silver tabby

WARRIORS-

Sedgestep- tom- brown/gray tabby **Apprentice, Riverpaw**

Rowanpelt- tom- ginger tabby

Spotswoop- she-cat- blue gray with darker spots

Sootstorm- tom- gray with black spots

Sandthistle- she-cat- light golden tabby

Ivyfern- she-cat- white with golden spots

Hopewillow- she-cat- silver tabby

Gorseflame- tom- gray tabby

Jaggedstripe- tom- white with long jagged black stripe down one hind leg; **Apprentice, Rosepaw**

Flowerfrost- she-cat- golden tabby **Apprentice, Rainpaw**

Dewfeather- tom- blue/gray

Ripplemist- tom- light gray tabby; **apprentice, Dewpaw**

Embermoon- she-cat- ginger tabby

Yellowclaw- tom- golden tabby

Foxleaf- she-cat- dark ginger

Cindercloud- she-cat- dark gray tabby

QUEENS-

Blossomshine- she-cat- tortoiseshell

Pouncefall- she-cat- blue/gray

ELDERS-

Jumpwing- tom- black

Blazemoon- she-cat- light ginger tabby

APPRENTICES-

Dewpaw- tom- white with gray spots

Rosepaw- she-cat- cream tabby

Rainpaw- she-cat- tortoiseshell

Riverpaw- tom- silver pelt

BreezeClan

LEADER- Bristlestar- she-cat- blue/gray

DEPUTY- Splashfame- tom- ginger with black ear tips

MEDICINE CAT- Echosight- tom- very dark gray tabby

WARRIORS-

Eelstrike- tom- tan tabby

Juniperheart- she-cat- black with white paws; **Apprentice, Mintpaw**

Maplefoot- tom- tortoiseshell

Stagfeather- she-cat- white with gray/brown spots

Doesong- she-cat- cream tabby

Otterclaw- tom- brown tabby; **Apprentice, Littlepaw**

Sleekfeather- she-cat- light golden tabby

Snakecrawl- tom- gray/brown tabby; **apprentice, Scorchpaw**

Shredthorn- tom

Meadowshine- she-cat- light brown tabby

Rushleap- she-cat- white with brown stripes; **Apprentice, Timberpaw**

Littlehawk- tom- white with brown spots; **Apprentice, Flintpaw**

Owlear- tom- brown tabby

Nightsky- she-cat- very dark gray tabby

QUEENS-

Crowshade- she-cat- black tabby

Fawnskip- she-cat- light brown tabby

ELDERS-

Ashwing- tom- spotted gray

Goosefur- tom- light blue gray tabby

Fogsight- she-cat- light gray tabby

APPRENTICES-

Mintpaw- she-cat- light gray tabby with darker spots

Littlepaw- she-cat- black tabby

Timberpaw- tom- light brown tabby

Flintpaw- she-cat- silver tabby with black paws and muzzle

Scorchpaw- tom- black

StormClan

LEADER- Deerstar- she-cat- light brown with white spots

DEPUTY- Sparkflight- tom- ginger with white flecks

MEDICINE CAT- Oakfern- she-cat- brown tabby; **Apprentice, Swallowsight**

WARRIORS-

Scarclaw- tom- dark ginger with lots of scars

Rivershade- tom- darkish silver tabby; **Apprentice, Stagpaw**

Oatspot- tom- dark brown with lighter brown spots

Ratheart- tom- brown/gray tabby

Sparrowspring- she-cat brown/gray tabby; **Apprentice, Tinypaw**

Leafbreeze- she-cat- light gray tabby

Rootwing- she-cat- golden with white spots

Thrushtail- she-cat- tan gabby

Graycloud- she-cat- gray tabby

QUEENS-

Goldentail- she-cat- gold tabby

Fallenstorm- she-cat- blue gray

ELDERS-

Fennelleaf- tom- gray tabby

Elderbark- she-cat- silver tabby

Willowleaf- she-cat- tortoiseshell

APPRENTICES-

Swallowsight- tom- brown tabby

Stagpaw- tom- dark gray tabby

Tinypaw- tom- blue gray tabby

Cats outside Clans-

Ivy- she-cat- white with gray/black eartips and paws (mother of Hope, Stream, Fern, and Bristle) mate to Bracken

Bracken- tom- ginger/brown with white chest and paws

Hope- she-kit- black with gray paws, ears, and tailtip

Stream- she-kit- gray/blue

Fern- she-kit- spotted silver

Bristle- she-kit- black and white

Birch- tom- brown spotted tabby (no stripes tho)

Silver- she-cat- silver with darker stripe all the way down her body

Golden- she-cat- yellow-golden with darker yellow streaks

Chapter 12

[image]

Ravenpaw stood, nervous now. What was he supposed to say? He was still hurt at the fact that Jaypaw had pushed him away before. Despite her being scared, they were still siblings.

"How do you know?" Jaypaw interrupted his thoughts, her sky blue eyes shining with curiosity. It gave him a little relief that she was not still upset with him for being so mean back.

"Echosplash told me." Ravenpaw mumbled, remembering the harsh words he had said to his sister.

"You know what this means, right Ravenpaw?" Jaypaw asked. When Ravenpaw was silent, Jaypaw said, "We're half-clan! We might be able to swim!" Instead of being worried, Jaypaw looked adventurous, curious. Of course, she didn't consider the dangerous factors of being half-clan.

"Oh, don't look so grouchy, Ravenpaw", Jaypaw said, bumping him playfully. She seemed to be willing to let their troubles go. *Maybe I should let it go too. She's my sister after all.*

I wouldn't do that if I were you, young one.

A voice rang in Ravenpaw's mind. Ravenpaw shook his dark furred head. Those weren't his thoughts. Why was he hearing things?

Don't be scared, the voice continued. ***I'm here to help.***

"Ravenpaw? Are you okay?" Jaypaw said.

Ravenpaw shook his head again. "I'm...fine. I need to get some rest. I'll see you later, Jaypaw." He left her looking slightly confused, and he felt a little guilty for leaving her like that, with his mood changing so fast. He was often like that, and most times wished he wasn't.

Ravenpaw climbed into his nest and closed his eyes, tired from the gathering. He also wanted to see if he could get the voice to come back, so he could make sure he wasn't imagining it. And so he could figure out what it meant. He felt like Jaypaw, with a million things swirling around in his brain. He wanted to dwell on meeting his father, Ripplemist.

But, a few moments later, he heard the squealing of young apprentices. *Great.*

"How was the gathering, Ravenpaw? We barely saw you come in, you're so shadowy and sneaky!" Frostpaw exclaimed. Ravenpaw ignored her.

Ravenpaw noticed Alderpaw curled up in his nest, asleep. *At least one cat is sane in here.*

He was distracted from his attempt to sleep yet again with the loud voice of another apprentice. "Did anything exciting happen?" Hazelpaw's mew said.

"Were there any big, scary cats?" tiny Robinpaw asked, her amber eyes wide.

Sudden annoyance bubbled up in Ravenpaw's chest. "Go away!" he hissed. "Let me get some rest for StarClan's sake! Go bother Jaypaw instead!"

The apprentices scrambled out of the den, frightened by Ravenpaw's anger. He felt the usual guilt that hit him after he lashed out at someone. He wanted to tell the apprentices he didn't mean it, he was just tired.

He heard them pad up to Jaypaw, who had just entered the camp. Ravenpaw scented wet fur. *Do not tell me Jaypaw tried to swim.*

Robinpaw said, "Hey, Jaypaw! Why are you all wet? How was the gathering? You're brother's a meanie, he won't tell us anything!"

Ravenpaw shook his head, his cheeks brushing the moss. She really *had* tried to swim. It didn't surprise him. She'd probably tried to catch a fish, too.

"Well I'm wet because...I slipped into a puddle. I can tell you guys all about the gathering tomorrow, I need some sleep right now. But first-" Jaypaw shook out her fur, showering the young apprentices with droplets.

"Ack! Now we're all wet, Jaypaw!" Hazelpaw exclaimed, her fur on end.

"Well now I'm all dry. You guys should go get some sleep too- especially you, Frostpaw! You look dead on your feet!" Frostpaw indeed had her eyes half closed and looked as if she needed a nice long nap. The way that she dealt with the kits easily without making them upset made Ravenpaw itch with jealousy. *Why couldn't I have just asked nicely?*

The three apprentices padded into the den, thankfully not disturbing Ravenpaw, as he fell into a deep, dark sleep.

When Ravenpaw woke up, he had to do a double take at his surroundings. This was *not* the ShadeClan camp- it didn't look or smell anything like it. He was on the edge of an ocean, but the water was almost black. The sand was deep gray, and the scent of rot wreathed around the whole place, making Ravenpaw gag. *Where in all the stars am I?*

Ravenpaw turned around to see the trees, which were blackened and slimy with rot. A *caw* sounded from up above, and Ravenpaw looked up to see a huge dark vulture circling over the place.

The sandy area was wide, and for the first time Ravenpaw began to notice the shadows creeping across the beach... the shadows of cats. One particularly large shadow was coming closer to Ravenpaw, and as he watched the dark creature seemed to come from the sand. Before he knew it, a cat was standing in front of him.

It was a tom, and he was enormous. His muscles rippled under his pelt, and he was black with a white underbelly and tail tip. He also had white markings on his broad face, and he had several long scars on his body. The scariest part of him was his amber eyes, piercing Ravenpaw's thoughts.

"Hello, Ravenpaw." The tom said. "Welcome to the Shadow Sea." as Ravenpaw watched, more cats crept out of the sand and formed a cluster behind this tom. "This is where warriors come to become the most cunning and skilled fighters in all of the Clans." his amber eyes flickered like flame as he went on.

His voice sounded familiar. As Ravenpaw listened to him talk, he realized- this was the cat who's voice he'd heard in his head!

"We have noticed that you have the abilities to fight well, even to exceed the teachings of your training. We think that you deserve to channel that power for the good of your Clan." the tom swept his tail towards the shadows swirling behind him.

"Aren't I asleep? Who even are you? What's wrong with this place?" Ravenpaw asked, all his questions falling out of his mouth.

"Oh, where are my manners!" The tom suddenly smirked and shook his head. "I never introduced myself. My name is Darkspirit." He looked at Ravenpaw, making deadly eye contact with him. "We could give you everything you ever wanted. Excellent fighting skills, extra knowledge. We are spirits, here to guide you in the ways of fighting for your clan. And there's nothing *wrong* with this place, StarClan just- doesn't approve of us." He gestured to the large groups of cats behind him, and Ravenpaw had a feeling that even more lurked in the shadows of this place. "I've noticed that you have a certain *spark* that I'm looking for. You see, I wanted to help make the clans great. Like you, I wanted to have a life worth telling stories about. But I made mistakes, and ended up here. Oh, not that the Shadow Sea is a bad place to be, of course; that's not what I meant. I meant I ended up *dead.* Ravenpaw, I merely want to guide you, to help you avoid the mistakes that I made."

As Darkspirit said these things, another figure came out from the sand. A tortoiseshell she-cat, with a cruel smile and the same amber eyes as Darkspirit. She had much rougher scars, though- her face was covered in them, and her ears were almost clawed off. They could have been brother and sister.

"What do you say, Ravenpaw?" Darkspirit said. "Will you join us? I can promise that you won't regret it. You'll be able to show your

clan that you're just as important as that sister of yours."

Ravenpaw took a minute to process what he had just heard. Wasn't he only dreaming, though? Suddenly, these random spirits could teach him all he wanted to know? But, he did want to prove that he was just as good as Jaypaw. And StarClan cats came to the others in dreams. Jaypaw had seen them, and she learned from them. Why couldn't spirit cats come to him and teach him things?

"I...I'll have to think about it." Ravenpaw said.

"Of course, of course," Darkspirit purred. "Take all the time you need."

The last thing Ravenpaw saw before waking up was Darkspirit's pair of chilling amber eyes.

Chapter 13

[image]

"Jaypaw, where has your mind been? That's not marigold, that's tansy."

Sunwatcher's voice snapped Jaypaw out of her trance. She was sorting herbs, and she had gotten the marigold and tansy mixed up. Her mind had been elsewhere, and she guessed the leaves had just looked similar in her eyes.

"I'm sorry, Sunwatcher. I thought that was marigold." Jaypaw's mind had been occupied with thoughts of the prophecy, Darkspirit, and Ravenpaw for a while, and now it felt like she had no more headspace due to the news of her father.

"Jaypaw, you've been all over the place since the gathering." Sunwatcher said. "Did something happen there?"

Jaypaw wanted to yowl "Yes, something happened! I learned something that changed how I look at my family!" but she had to keep her family's secret safe. "No, nothing happened." she sighed and went back to her sorting, starting the tansy and marigold over again. "I've just been tired recently."

"Are you sure, Jaypaw? You seem in the clouds very often." Sunwatcher looked genuinly concerned for his apprentice.

"Yeah." Jaypaw said. "I think I'm just going to take a walk through the forest and clear my head."

"Okay." Sunwatcher said with relief. "I hope it helps you."

As Jaypaw walked into the clear sunlight, she breathed in the crisp, pine scented air. The beautiful scents and sights helped clear her head and help her think better. She was glad that Sunwatcher was getting better- his health was good enough now that he could walk around camp and help Jaypaw with the medicine cat duties.

What am I going to do? She thought. *The Ripplemist thing I can handle, I think, but this prophecy...It's messed up my relationship with Ravenpaw, for this little amount of time, at least. And I know the Shadows are rising, just like the prophecy said. I can feel it- something's going to go wrong soon. If only I-*

Her thoughts were interrupted by a loud rustle in the bushes about four fox-lengths away. Jaypaw turned, and she looked into the thick brambles. She took a few steps closer, but then the bush rustled again and she stayed where she was. If there was something dangerous in it, she didn't want to get hurt.

Jaypaw peered into the bush, and saw a pair of clover green eyes staring back at her through the bush. It was a cat, an oak-colored tom, and all Jaypaw could see of him was his spotted forehead and his emerald eyes.

Jaypaw and the brown spotted tom looked at each other for a few moments neither of them daring to speak, and right as Jaypaw blinked, the tom rushed off. Jaypaw caught a glimpse of his slender body weaving through the trees before he had completely dissapeared through the ShadeClan forest.

Something about the cat- Jaypaw felt sure she would see him again. She felt some kind of pull towards his presence, almost. She nearly took off after him, and she would have, if she didn't pick back up on her thoughts.

If only I could tell someone about the prophecy. Someone like a parent. She would love to tell Echosplash, but Echosplash would worry about her, wanting to protect her kit, and she would also want to tell Twigstar and Duskblaze and Sunwatcher and the whole Clan would be in a panic after a moonrise.

Then it hit her- Sunwatcher! He was another medicine cat, he would understand. She hadn't told him before, because she didn't want to raise panic, but...now seemed like she had waited long enough. The rippling echoes line had jarred her, and she hadn't wanted to tell him before, but now she felt that it was time.

Jaypaw trudged back to camp, her mind on the prophecy and the

spotted tom. She still felt so sure that they would meet again. She decided, that if she saw the tom again, or the instinct of sureness came up when she saw another cat, she would follow it. It might be a message from StarClan!

She would immediately tell Sunwatcher or Twigstar about prophecies before anyone else, too. Not Ravenpaw. Though she cared about her brother, she needed the entirety of the Clan to be safe first.

This prophecy was an example of how not to handle something important like this, but she told herself, it was her first time, and this was still only her second moon of training, almost her third. She would get better.

As she returned to camp, she almost ran into Dovepelt. "Hello, Jaypaw." Dovepelt said.

"Where are you off to?" Jaypaw asked.

"Just going hunting." Dovepelt said. She was Echosplash's sister, and therefore Jaypaw's kin. Dovepelt and Echosplash had raised kits together in the nursery, as Jaypaw and Ravenpaw had been born shortly before Dovepelt's kit, Alderpaw.

I wonder if she knows about our father, Jaypaw thought with a pang of irritation. Why hadn't Echosplash told her who her father was as a kit?

"Are you looking for Sunwatcher? He just went to collect herbs." Dovepelt said.

"Yes, I was looking for him. Thanks for letting me know." Jaypaw dipped her head and headed into camp, making herself think of something else.

She padded into the medicine den, and found Blackkit whimpering at the entrance. The black-patterned kit's face melted into relief when he saw Jaypaw.

"What happened, Blackkit?" Jaypaw asked. "What's the matter?"

"I got a thorn in my paw!" Blackkit whined. "Can you help me?"

Heatherkit, who was sitting next to her brother, said, "We were playing in the forest, and Lynxfur doesn't know we were gone. She thought we were napping, so she went to go hunting since we're almost apprentices." Heatherkit's eyes were wide. "Please don't tell her we were gone, Jaypaw! We don't want to get in trouble."

"Don't worry, I won't get you in trouble." Jaypaw said. "As long as you stay in camp when you're supposed to from now on." Blackkit nodded aggressively.

Jaypaw proceeded to gently extracted the thorn from his paw and warned him that if either of them *did* go in the forest before they were apprentices, the foxes would sneak up on them. She did feel a little bad for him, though- the thorn was decently sized.

A few minutes after this, Sunwatcher came back. Jaypaw came up to him and said, "Sunwatcher- there's something I need to tell you."

He simply nodded his head, and they went to the back of the den. Jaypaw told him all about the dream and the prophecy, and it felt like she had lifted a thousand mice off of her shoulders.

When she was finished, there was not anger on his face, but there sure was surprise. Thankfully, he didn't lecture her on the fact that she should have told him earlier- she already knew that.

But, one thing he said shocked her.

"What was the big black and white tom's name again?" He asked. "The amber eyed one that you saw in the Shadow Sea." He said it as if he hoped there was another black and white tom, as if he hoped it wasn't Darkspirit.

"His name was Darkspirit." The shock on Sunwatcher's face was apparent, in his expression and amber eyes.

"Jaypaw." he said. "I never told you *my* story, did I?" When Jaypaw shook her head, confused, he said something that made Jaypaw's mind whirl again.

"Darkspirit was my brother."

Chapter 14

[image]

2 moons later

"From this moment on, you will be known as Ravenclaw. Your Clan welcomes you as a full warrior."

Jaypaw yelled and cheered louder than most, since Ravenclaw was her brother. They might still not be speaking much, but he was her brother.

In the past two moons, not much had happened. Ravenclaw had excelled in his training and passed his assessment, and his apprenticeship has ended quicker than most- he had been 10 moons instead of 12, meaning the training had lasted 4 moons instead of 6.

Another thing that had happened was the apprenticeship of Blackpaw and Heatherpaw, who had recently reached six moons. Their mentors were chosen to be Thunderheart for Blackpaw, and Tawnyshade for Heatherpaw. It was perfect- two young warriors who were siblings chosen to mentor two young sibling apprentices. Both cats would learn things from each other.

Jaypaw didn't at all regret telling Sunwatcher about the prophecy and her dream. In fact, now she knew more about Darkspirit's past.

Darkspirit and Sunwatcher had another sibling. Their sister, Ivythorn, was a cunning, wicked she cat who followed her brother's orders and trusted no one but him.

All three siblings had the same amber eyes that glimmered in different ways. Sunwatcher's eyes were warm and welcoming, Darkspirit's were smart and calculating, and Ivythorn's eyes were the last thing that some cats had seen.

Just then, Jaypaw remembered something- it was the medicine cat half-moon meeting tonight! Jaypaw glanced at Ravenclaw; would

she get her full name tonight too?

No, she thought. It was too early. But she knew every herb, and Sunwatcher even let her treat cats when he wasn't in camp now. However, medicine cats required a very thorough training.

"Are you ready, Jaypaw?" Sunwatcher asked. "It's time to go to the meeting."

"I'm ready!" Jaypaw's enthusiacstic mew drew the attention of Ravenclaw, who rolled his eyes but smiled in an "oh Jaypaw" sort of way.

"Someone's excited." Sunwatcher purred. "Well, let's go then." Sunwatcher nodded to Twigstar, and she nodded back, ackowledging **(i think i misspelled that lmao)** that they were leaving.

At the Silvertree, Jaypaw started up a conversation with Streamspirit. "Ravenclaw's a warrior now. My brother." She told her.

"That's great! Streamspirit purred. Just then, Sunwatcher spoke loud enough for all the medicine cats to hear.

"If I could have your attention, there is an announcement I would like to make."

The clearing fell quiet, and Sunwatcher turned to Jaypaw. "Jaypaw, come forward."

Jaypaw's mind raced. *He really is going to make me a medicine cat! This is it!!*

"Jaypaw, do you promise to serve your Clan with all of your loyalty until you join the elders or StarClan?"

"Yes", Jaypaw said breathlessly.

"Then I present you to StarClan as a full medicine cat. Jaypaw, from this moment on, you will be known as Jayflight. May StarClan light your path." Sunwatcher touched his nose to Jayflight's forehead.

"Jayflight! Jayflight! Jayflight!" the medicine cats cheered. Jayflight felt like she was glowing. Her dream as a kit had come true- she was a medicine cat now!

Streamspirit playfully bumped into her. "Congratulations!" She purred. "You deserve it." "Thanks!" Jayflight said. They layed down next to the Silvertree and closed their eyes.

Jayflight was immediately dropped into a dream. Stars glittered around her when she opened her eyes. Relief washed over her. It wasn't the Shadow Sea.

"Congratulations, young one," a familiar voice said. Jayflight turned around. It was Drizzleheart!

"Sunwatcher has taught you well." Drizzleheart said. "I will give him a visit soon." She smiled. "What a beautiful world. So cruel, but so beautiful." Jaypaw noticed Drizzleheart looking past her. A beautiful sunset of a thousand colors was painted in the sky.

Jayflight padded over to Drizzleheart and sat beside her, facing the sunset. And in that moment, Jayflight felt like she learned one of the most important lessons in her life; beautiful things....never last.

Chapter 15

[image]

Jayflight woke with a cold surprise as a thick, heavy raindrop plopped onto her fur. The beautiful sunset she had watched with Drizzleheart was long gone.

Sunwatcher and Oakfern were awake, too. "I think it's time we go home, Jayflight."

Warmth shot through Jayflight at the use of her new name. She was an official medicine cat now! She felt older, more important. *It's only been one night, you know.* Her brain said. She shook off the thought and said "coming!" and ran over to Sunwatcher. She couldn't wait to share with the Clan her new name.

They said goodbye to the medicine cats and departed. "You have grown so much. You were my clumsy little apprentice, now you're my clumsy little medicine cat." Jayflight purred with laughter; it was true, she was full of energy and tended to be clumsy.

"Did you get any visions?" She asked him.

The smile faded off of Sunwatcher's face. "No." he said. "Only darkness. But i thought i smelled the scent if my brother, tinged with the smell of blood."

Jayflight shuddered. Darkspirit was getting too close for her liking. "Should we tell Twigstar?" she asked. "No, I don't want any panic yet." he said. "What did you see?"

"I spoke to Drizzleheart again." she said. "she congratulated me on becoming a medicine cat and said that you mentored me well." The unusual statement that she had thought of returned to mind. "Sunwatcher, is it true that beautiful things don't last forever?"

Sunwatcher looked deep in thought after she said that. "I wouldn't think so." he said. "Look at the Clans. they have survived many

things, and we are still living in beautiful forests and beside dazzling rivers."

That's a good point, Jayflight thought. *Maybe I was seeing it wrong. Maybe what i was supposed to learn was..*
that if you really love something, it will survive. We love our Clans, right? and they have survived through thick and thin.

"Thanks, Sunwatcher. I had that thought and wasn't sure if it was important, but now i realize something even better; we have to fight for our beatiful things." she smiled.

Sunwatcher purred. "You have become so smart, my young apprentice. Your mother will be so proud."

And my father? Jayflight thought. *Will he care, or even know?*

As the two medicine cats pushed through the entrance to camp, there was a noise. A cat..yelling? No, the voice of several angry cats. Jayflight pushed through the bushes to see what was causing the commotion.

"How could you do this to ShadeClan?"

"I'm ashamed of you!"

"Traitors!"

The cats in the Clan were circled around two cats. Jayflight could smell...LakeClan? what were they doing here?

Shellcloud, who had left early from the medicine cat meeting, before the others were awake, stood by the LakeClan leader. He looked slightly guilty. Sunwatcher padded up to him. "My dear friend, what is going on?"

As Jayflight padded into camp, everything got quiet. Ravenclaw padded up and stood beside her, glaring at the angry cats. "What's going on?" Jayflight whispered. "Shellcloud had a sign in his way home from the Silvertree." Ravenclaw whispered back in a nervous tone, despite his angry face. "A Jay's feather fell into a pond, causing huge ripples to flow around the pool...and they put the

pieces together. We 'have no father'. A Jay's feather and Ripples. Two cats from LakeClan and ShadeClan sneaking out at night, and suddenly stopping when one gives birth to kits..." he shook his head as he trailed off. "They know. They know we're half Clan."

ndusndjsnskwmskwdjsj i hate the writing in this chapter :,)

Chapter 16

[image]

Horror flooded through Jayflight's body. Sunwatcher's face expressed what she felt as Shellcloud retold the story to him.

"They need to be punished!" Icefur snarled.

"I agree." Alderclaw added. "They broke the warrior code. They deserve punishment."

Echosplash had her head bent in the middle of the circle of cats. But Ripplemist stood his ground. "We were only following our hearts. And your Clan got two beautiful kits out of it, so don't be complaining." he smiled warmly at his kits. "Jaypaw, Ravenclaw, i am proud to be your father."

Jayflight didn't even care that he didn't know her name yet, she was just happy that her father did care, and he loved her.

"He's right." Dovepelt said. "My sister would never try to harm her Clan."

"Yes." Stonewish said, and glared at her mate, Troutstripe, who seemed to be protesting against the two cats. "Our kits would never hurt our Clan purposefully, would they?"

Troutstripe bowed his head. "No." he admitted. "But they still deserve punishment for breaking the warrior code."

"They sure do, those fleabags." Skyrunner mumbled. Ravenclaw growled at her, and she glared back.

"What does our leader have to say?" Duskblaze, the deputy, asked.

Twigstar, who had been speaking with Spotstar about the situation, stood up from where she was sitting. "Me and Spotstar have agreed on a punishment." She said. "In order to regain yours and the other Clan's trust, you will swap Clans for a moon." She began looking

towards Echosplash and Ripplemist. "You will treat that Clan like it is your own, and serve them, hunt for them, do all of the things you would have done for your own Clan.

Jayflight thought that was a great punishment, honestly; she would get to know her father! But she would miss her mother, and it was probably a dreadful punishment for them..she couldn't imagine leaving her Clan for a quarter moon, let alone a full moon.

Ripplemist and Echosplash nodded, not wanting anymore heat from the rest of the cats.

"Are you all satisfied with that?" Twigstar asked. Most of the cats were silent, until Icefur piped up again. "What about Jaypaw and Ravenclaw? Will they be punished? They're half Clan!"

"Did they choose to be half clan?" Twigstar shot back at him. Icefur didn't reply. "I asked you a question, Icefur." Twigstar seemed utterly calm. Jayflight admired her leader; she wasn't hurting Icefur, but she was still teaching him a lesson; to follow your leader's orders.

"No, they didn't." Icefur mumbled. His pale blue eyes were focused on the ground.

"Jaypaw and Ravenclaw will receive no punishment. There is one more announcement I would like to make, before you go." she said. Twigstar turned her emerald eyes on Jayflight. "We welcome you as a full medicine cat, Jayflight. I expect great things from you." she smiled, and turned to her den.

As cats began to trickle back into their dens, go on patrols, and get food from the fresh kill pile, Echosplash padded up to her kits. "I'm sorry I embarrassed you." she said. "But i'm happy no one got hurt." "Oh, Mom, you could never embarrass me with this! I'm proud to have Ripplemist as my father, he seems like a great cat." Jayflight said, and pressed her nose into Echosplash's fur.

Echosplash licked Jayflight's ear, and looked at her and Ravenclaw. "You will always be my kits, half clan or not. While I am gone, get to know your father. And take care of yourselves." She licked

Ravenclaw's ear and went with the LakeClan cats.

Jayflight and Ravenclaw awkwardly turned to each other.

"Look-"

"No, you look. I'm sorry for flipping out on you, you grouchy furball." Jayflight said to him. "I shouldn't have acted like that. You're my brother and you always will be. One fight between us won't change that." they smiled at each other.

"Want to share a squirrel?" Ravenclaw gestured to the fresh kill pile.

Jayflight smiled. "I'd love to."

Author's note: midway

[image]

this isn't EXACTLY the middle of the story, but whatever.

If you made it this far in the story, THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR READING! I really appreciate it!

I hope you like the story so far and enjoy the rest! Again sorry for slow updates! I've been working on this story FOREVER and can't wait to finish it since i have huge plans for the rest of my OC stories, and this story is kinda hard and boring to write since it's the opening of the series, and it introduces a lot of stuff into my OC series. BUT I HAVE A LOT OF GOOD STUFF PLANNED IN THE FUTURE, I PROMISE!!

May StarClan light your path!

Chapter 17

[image]

Ravenclaw chewed on his bite of squirrel as he listened to Jayflight tell him about the strange cat she had seen in the forest the other day.

"He- or she- I think it was a tom though-" she swallowed her bite of squirrel. "He was this brown tom, with darker brown spots all over him. And his eyes were, like, and emerald color but brighter, like flower stems." "How big was he?" asked Ravenclaw. "About our size." Jayflight responded.

"Have you ever seen him before?"

Ravenclaw sighed. "I don't think so." he had never seen the tom that Jayflight described.

"Hey, Ravenclaw!" Duskblaze called from across camp. "Come on evening patrol with us!" In the patrol was Icefur, Dawnlight, Duskblaze, and- Ravenclaw's belly flipped- Ripplemist.

His father smiled encouragingly at him. Ravenclaw turned to Jayflight, and said "See you later." she purred in response through her bite of squirrel.

Ravenclaw padded over to join the patrol, and noticed that Icefur seemed disgruntled to have been put in a patrol with Ripplemist and Ravenclaw. He was one of the few that still thought Ravenclaw and Jayflight should be punished.

Ripplemist's pale blue eyes shone. Duskblaze flicked her tail, signaling that the patrol was leaving. Ravenclaw walked up to his father, but when he got there he didn't exactly know what to say. 'The weather is good?' do you like it in ShadeClan?'

But it was his father who spoke first. "I've missed watching you grow up through the moons. I'm glad I finally have a chance to get

to know you." "Yeah. It's cool that I finally get to meet you. I spent a lot of my apprentice hood wondering who my father was, and now..." Ravenclaw trailed off. "Now I have you."

Ripplemist smiled. "I always wanted kits, but could never find the right cat. Until I met Echosplash." he let out a purr and skipped a little further along the path.

"Anyways, I want to hear about you!" Ripplemist said. He was like Jayflight; he just couldn't stop smiling. "How was your apprenticeship? Who's your best friend? Is there a..." his contagious smile grew into a smirk as he said "special she cat?"

Ravenclaw purred and shook his head. "My apprenticeship was nice, I don't have a best friend, and *no,* there isn't a 'special she cat' for me yet." Ravenclaw noticed that Ripplemist was a lot like Jayflight overall; his light gray tabby fur, sky blue eyes, and bubbly personality. Ravenclaw was more like Echosplash; quiet and smart, more so sticking to himself.

"Oooooh, are you sureeee?" Ripplemist teased. Ravenclaw rolled his eyes, but he grinned while doing so. "Yes, I'm very sure." he said. Ravenclaw lifted his muzzle and opened his mouth slightly to taste the air for prey. A warm, musky scent washed over his tongue. *Squirrel!*

Ravenclaw dropped into a hunting crouch, and flicked his tail for Ripplemist to do so too. Ripplemist was low to the ground already, beginning to creep in the direction of the squirrel.

A small tapping sound a few tail lengths in front of them. The squirrel was trying to break open an acorn.

Ripplemist slowly snaked around the squirrel, and flicked his tail to signal Ravenclaw to the other side of the small clearing.

He's going to chase it right into my claws. Ravenclaw thought. He began to slowly creep to the other side of the clearing.

As if on cue, when he got to the other side, Ripplemist was just about to jump out at the squirrel when the wind blew ever so

slightly in the direction of the squirrel. The small creature perked up, and ran away from Ripplemist, having caught his scent.

The squirrel ran right into Ravenclaw, and let out a small squeak as Ravenclaw pinned it down to the ground and delivered the killing bite.

Ripplemist let out a small whoop, and ran over, nudging Ravenclaw ever so slightly. "Nice Job! I should have sensed the wind though."

"Nah, it's okay. It worked even better that way." Ravenclaw replied. "Lets see what else we can catch."

They buried the squirrel, and padded along one of the small streams on the edge of the territory. Ripplemist slowed to a stop at one of the deeper spots in the shallow stream.

"Why are we stopping?" Ravenclaw asked. Ripplemist had sat at the edge of the stream and was staring down into the waters.

"Watch this." He said. Ripplemist sat there, and after about a minute, Ravenclaw was rather confused at what he was supposed to be watching. He was about to say something when Ripplemist jerked a paw into the water, and pulled out a small fish.

He quickly reached down and bit the flopping fish, killing it. "Ta-da!" Ripplemist said proudly.

"Wow!" Ravenclaw exclaimed. "How'd you do that?"

"I come from LakeClan, remember? You know, we catch fish and stuff. It's like, our thing." he joked.

Ravenclaw smiled. He had almost felt like Ripplemist lived here, in ShadeClan with him and Jayflight. being with him just felt so...natural.

The two of them worked together, catching two more mice, and Ripplemist caught another small fish. Once the sun started to set, they headed back to camp, their abundance of prey in their jaws.

Waiting for them in camp, was Jayflight. She bounded up to them,

looking at the prey they had.

"Ooh, fish!" she said. "I want to try!"

Ravenclaw smiled through the prey in his jaws. He had miles more today then he had in...he couldn't remember. Maybe ever?

The kits in the nursery, Blackkit and Heatherkit, raced to the entrance. "Hey Ravenclaw! What've you got today? Oooh! did you catch us a *cat?"* Heatherkit poked Ripplemist with her tiny paw. "Who're you, mister prey cat?"

Ravenclaw remembered that the kits had probably either been sleeping or in the nursery when it was announced that Ripplemist would be staying.

"I'm Ripplemist, and I brought you kits some special prey." He said, the such muffling his words.

Ripplemist dropped the smaller fish at the kits paws. They eagerly sniffed it, excited at the sight of new prey. Blackkit bit into the scaly fish. He chewed and swallowed, and he seemed to be thinking hard, his tiny kit face scrunched up in thought.

"It's really good!" Blackkit decided, going in for another bite. The kits dragged the fish into the nursery, Heatherkit shouting "Thank you Rippley Mister!" as she sat down to eat.

"Wow, the kits aren't, wrong, this is pretty good." Jayflight said. Ravenclaw snickered quietly, but Jayflight heard.

"What?" she asked. There was a small bit of fish dangling from her nose. Ripplemist started to purr too, and Jayflight saw that they were looking at her nose.

She went cross eyed to see what was there, and at that Ripplemist and Ravenclaw burst into laughter. Jayflight laughed too, simply because she love laughing. The three of them shared a happy moment, and Ravenclaw finally felt like he had a family.

Chapter 18

[image]

above is my pfp btw* *ignore the black paw

Jayflight licked her paw and drew it over her ear. The dawn light was just starting to trickle into camp, illuminating the dew that sparkled on the pines with a bright shimmer.

Today, she remembered, was-

"Our apprentice ceremony!" Heatherkit shouted as she and Blackkit bounded out of the nursery. "Finally!"

The kits trampled through the camp, and a few moments later, their mother, Lynxfur, grumpily came after them, still tired. "Come here you two! You can't be apprenticed looking like *that!*"

Lynxfur grabbed Heatherkit by her scruff, and licked down the fur that was sticking up on her back. "Moooom!" Heatherkit whined. "Do we *have* to do this?"

"You want to look good for the Clan, don't you?" Lynxfur said inbetween licks. After a few more complaints, Heatherkit gave up and sat, annoyed, with her mother until she was clean and Lynxfur moved onto Blackkit.

Jayflight chuckled, remembering how excited *she* had been as an apprentice. Absolutely bouncing off the walls- not much had changed.

Jayflight stuck her front legs out in a stretch, and saw Ravenclaw come out of the warriors den.

As he padded out from between the small clump of trees and brambles where the warriors den was located, Jayflight dropped into a crouch, and when Ravenclaw turned around to head into the center if camp, she pounced.

She landed on top of his chest, and he made and *oomph* sound as she prodded him with sheathed claws.

"Aughh, he's down! Pssh pshh, bam bam, Jayflight takes the win with a killer blow!" Jayflight purred and imitated a crowd. "Woo woo! Yeahh!"

Ravenclaw was still pinned, and he was laughing. Jayflight loved seeing her brother laugh, as it seemed rare these days. "This is why you are *not* a warrior."

"Come on, get up, I beat you, you can bow down and worship me and my amazing warrior skills later." Jayflight said, and Ravenclaw let out a snort as she lifted her paws from his shoulders.

The two siblings began to walk into camp where cats were beginning to gather for the oncoming apprentice ceremony that Heatherkit had made everyine aware of.

There was a large pine tree in the center of ShadeClan camp, and the lowest hanging branch on the tree was called StrongBranch, since it had never broken, through all the leaders that ShadeClan had that had made announcements on it, or the terrible storms that whipped the branches.

Sunwatcher padded up to Jayflight and Ravenclaw. "Good morning, Ravenclaw." Sunwatcher adressed him. Ravenclaw nodded back as a greeting.

"Jayflight, can you collect some chervil? After the ceremony, of course. Swiftfall's bellyache really wore out our supply." Sunwatcher asked.

A few cats away, Swiftfall, one of the Clan's young, bubbly warriors, shifted awkwardly. A few days ago, Swiftfall had eaten a stale piece of prey, and had had a raging bellyache for days.

Jayflight dipped her head. "Of course." Right after she replied, Twigstar jumped onto StrongBranch, and meowed for the Clan's attention.

Once everyone settled down, Twigstar spoke. "Today, we welcome

two new apprentices into our Clan." Heatherkit and Blackkit were practically bursting with excitement at the foot of the tree.

Twigstar flicked her tail for the two soon-to-be-apprentices to join her on StrongBranch. After the kits jumped up, Twigstar began, "Heatherkit, do you promise to learn the ways of the warrior and protect and serve your Clan?"

"I do." Heatherkit's voice was brimming with determination.

"Then by the poweres of StarClan, until you recieve your warrior names, you will be known as Heatherpaw. Your mentor will be Swiftfall." Swiftfall stepped out of the crowd, and jumped up onto StrongBranch. The branch swayed, but true to its name, didn't break.

Twigstar turned to Blackkit. "Blackkit, do you promise to serve your Clan through thick and thin and learn the ways of the warrior?"

"I do." his reply was steady and firm.

"Then by the powers of StarClan, until you recieve your warrior name, I prounounce you as Blackpaw. Your mentor will be Driftbreeze."

Well, that makes sense, since Swiftfall and Driftbreeze are sisters, Jayflight thought as she cheered the apprentices new names with the rest of the Clan.

As the new apprentices and mentors left the camp to go on their tour of the territory, Jayflight remembered that she had to go collect herbs.

"Hey, Jayflight!" called the voice of Ripplemist. "Want to share this mouse with me?"

"Sorry, Ripplemist, I can't, I have to go collect herbs." Jayflight replied. "Maybe when I get back?"n th

Ripplemist nodded. "Sure." he said and trotted off to return the prey to the pile. Jayflight quite liked having her father in camp- he brightened things up for her.

When Jayflight stepped into the forest, the scent of pine trees filled her mouth and nose. She took herself down towards the edge of Clan territory, where chervil grew.

As she followed the path, Jayflight's mind began to wander. Her thoughts skimmed through things she often thought and sometimes worried about, such as Darkspirit and Ivythorn, and what their next move would be- she hadn't seen Darkspirit in a while. But she was almost positive that Darkspirit or Ivythorn had been the one who attacked Sunwatcher moons ago, when she was an apprentice.

Once she got to the clump of chervil by the twolegplace, she bent over to pick some with her jaws. She had a huge pile and was about to pick it up when she heard a loud snap of a twig, and then something hiding.

Jayflight dropped low into a crouch, and peered through the bush to the territory past hers. What she saw and scented almost made her jump out of the bush.

It was the spotted, green eyed tom she'd seen moons ago!

Jayflight ducked back into the bush, hoping the tom hadn't seen her. She was on the verge of standing up and shouting something at the tom, but when she looked up, what she saw made her stomp her paw in frustration.

He was gone.

Chapter 19

[image]

i drew the picture above! do you like it? (it's Jaykit and Ravenkit playing)

Frustration surged through Jayflight. Something *about* this tom...seemed important, and she desperately longed to find out what.

Well, there's nothing I can do about it now, she thought, collecting her chervil and heading back to camp. *He's gone.*

That feeling, though, lingered- Jayflight knew he was important. Somehow.

Jayflight grabbed the last of the chervil with her teeth, and went back to camp. Her pelt brushed the leaves on the way into the camp, and she went into the medicine den to drop off the chervil.

"Here you go, Sunwatcher." Jayflight said, dropping the chervil on the floor of the medicine den. "As promised, a fresh stock of chervil."

"Thanks." Sunwatcher said. "There aren't any injured cats right now- you're free for the day."

"Thanks, Sunwatcher!" Jayflight said. She was glad to have Sunwatcher as a mentor. He was just so nice and calm.

Jayflight thought of what she wanted to do on her free day. Actually, she wanted to ask Sunwatcher about his siblings.

"Sunwatcher?" Jayflight asked. "Can I ask you something?"

"You just did." Sunwatcher said, smiling. "But yes, you can ask me something else too."

"How did Darkspirit and Ivythorn end up in the Shadow Sea?"

Jayflight asked. "What did they do that was so bad?"

Sunwatcher took a deep breath. "They killed cats before they were even warriors." he repiled. "Our father, who also resides in the Shadow Sea, gave them an uncontrollable taste of blood. He made them hate noble Clan ways- they began to think for themselves. They both got themselves exiled, and took refuge in another Clan, before that Clan exiled them too. StormClan." Sunwatcher sighed. "Their stupidity got them both killed."

Wow. Jayflight thought. *That would have been horrible to grow up with.*

"Thank you for telling me." Jayflight said in a small voice. "I'm just gonna...go." She said.

Jayflight padded outside the medicine den, letting that sink in. *If the prophecy was correct,* she thought, *then that is what we're up against.*

Suddenly, a thought stopped her in her tracks. *Wait...how did Darkspirit or Ivythorn get here to attack Sunwatcher?* Jayflight thought. *Spirit cats can't just...appear like that.*

Jayflight raced back to the medicine den. "Sunwatcher!" she exclaimed when she arrived. "Do you remember what attacked you that day when you were alone in the forest?"

Sunwatcher looked puzzled. "No." He said. "I smelled an unusual scent, though."

Things were starting to click into place in Jayflight's mind. "I think it was Darkspirit or Ivythorn. One of them came down to attack you, probably kill you. They know that I got the prophecy, and that you know too much about them." she said.

Sunwatcher's eyes slowly dawned with realization. "But how did they get down here?" He asked. "They're dead."

"That's what I don't know." Jayflight said. "Can I go to the SilverTree to speak to StarClan about it?"

Sunwatcher considered what Jayflight asked. "At sunset." He said. "And take a warrior to guard you. I don't want them somehow getting to you." by *them,* Sunwatcher meant Darkspirit, Ivythorn, and possibly other Shadow Sea cats.

Jayflight nodded, and stepped out of the den. She padded over to Ravenclaw, getting a pang in her chest when she realized she hadn't told him about Darkspirit and Ivythorn yet.

"Ravenclaw?" she said. "Can we talk for a moment? I need to tell you something important."

"Yeah, sure." Ravenclaw said. They padded out of camp, into the forest, and to a clump of trees that hid them well. Jayflight sat down and turned to Ravenclaw.

Ravenclaw's eyes had a spark of curiosity. "What is it?" he asked.

Before Jayflight could stop herself, she was spilling it all to him, her dream, Sunwatcher's siblings, refusing to go into the Shadow Sea, her plan to go to the SilverTree tonight- everything.

When she was done. Ravenclaw stared in shock. A mumble of "Wow." was all he could get out.

"Will you go to the SilverTree with me? I know it's a lot to ask, but Sunwatcher wants a warrior to go with me...just in case." Jayflight asked.

"Yeah, I'll go." Ravenclaw said. Relief washed over Jayflight- she couldn't imagine going with a grumpy warrior like Icefur.

"Does Twigstar know?" Ravenclaw asked. Jayflight felt a jolt- they had forgotten to tell their leader. "No."

Ravenclaw sighed. "Well, she should know. I know that you don't want to spark panic in the Clans, but you should at least tell your Clan leader."

"Sunwatcher told me not to tell anyone." Jayflight said. "But I think we should."

"Well then why did you tell me?"

Jayflight thought, *You're my brother,* but that wasn't the reason. If Darkspirit was her brother, she wouldn't have told him.

"Because I trust you." She finally replied. "You won't tell anyone, right?"

"Of course not." Ravenclaw said. "I would never."

"Good. Let's head back to camp." Jayflight said.

***

A few hours later, Jayflight and Ravenclaw were ready to leave camp and head to the SilverTree.

"You can't hunt, or eat anything. The SilverTree is a sacred place- never forget that."

Sunwatcher and Twigstar stood in front of them. Twigstar had been told by Sunwatcher everything- apparently he had the same mindset as Ravenclaw.

"If anything happens on the way there, come back immidiately." Sunwatcher said. "We can't risk losing our medicine cat."

Jayflight smiled. "What, you think I can't look after myself?"

Sunwatcher smiled. "Nope, not in the slightest." When Jayflight nudged him playfully, he said "I'm kidding- even without training, you could kill a fox in a fit."

"You bet I could." Jayflight said. Sunwatcher dissapeared into the medicine den, and came back after a minute, clutching two bundles of herbs in his jaws. "Eat these for strength. They'll keep you from getting hungry."

Jayflight and Ravenclaw licked up the herbs. Ravenclaw made a face, and Jayflight said "Yuuck! I hate these."

Sunwatcher purred with laughter. "I think it's time we go."

Ravenclaw said, anbd Jayflight nodded.

"Goodbye, then. See you at Sunrise." Twigstar said. "And let us know if StarClan tells you anything."

Jayflight and Ravenclaw made their way to the SilverTree, and Jayflight remembered seeing the brown tom. It was this morning, yet it felt like years ago. "I saw the brown tom today." she said as they arrived in the clearing where the SilverTree was.

The SilverTree stood, in all its glory, in front of them. "Wow." Ravenclaw breathed out. "Its..."

"Beautiful." Jayflight said, smiling. "I know."

Jayflight padded over to the tree, and laid down next to it. "You can keep watch." She said to Ravenclaw. He nodded.

Preparing herself for what was to come, Jayflight reached with her neck and touched the SilverTree with her nose, closing her eyes.

Allegiances Update #2

[image]

lol, have a cliffhanger :)

also, when i do these updates, sometimes i slightly alter the descs a bit, so if they are different, thats why

ShadeClan

LEADER- Twigstar- she cat- gray pelt and emerald green eyes

DEPUTY- Duskblaze- she cat- ginger tabby with amber eyes

MEDICINE CATS- Sunwatcher- tom- golden tabby with amber eyes

Jayflight- she cat- gray tabby with white paws and blue eyes

WARRIORS-

Bounceleap- tom- ginger tabby **Apprentice, Alderpaw**

Snowflame- she cat- white pelt

Firefrost- she cat- white with ginger paws, ears, and tail tip **Apprentice, Hazelpaw**

Icefur- tom- white furred **Apprentice, Frostpaw**

Stormfeather- tom- dark gray pelt

Dawnlight- she-cat- light ginger

Lionpounce- tom- long furred golden tabby

Tawnyshade- she cat- tortoiseshell with black paws

Troutstripe- tom- gray/brown tabby

Thunderheart- tom- thick gray pelt

Alderclaw- tom- dark ginger with white splotch on chest

Skyrunner- she cat- dark ginger tabby **Apprentice, Robinpaw**

Driftbreeze- she cat- brown tabby **Apprentice, Blackpaw**

Swiftfall- she cat- light brown tabby **Apprentice, Heatherpaw**

Tigercloud- tom- dark brown tabby with white paws, belly, and chest

Echosplash- she cat- very dark gray tabby; temporarily in LakeClan

Dovepelt- she cat- light gray tabby with unique purple eyes

Silversky- she cat- silver pelt

Lynxfur- she cat- unusual lynx-like fur pattern

Ravenclaw- tom- black pelt with blue eyes

ELDERS-

Storktail- tom- white with brown spots

Stonewish- she cat- gray tabby

APPRENTICES-

Alderpaw- tom- deep ginger pelt

Hazelpaw- she cat- tan tabby

Frostpaw- she cat- white with light gray spots

Robinpaw- she cat- gray/brown tabby

Blackpaw- tom- black tabby

Heatherpaw- she cat- light brown pelt

LakeClan

LEADER- Spotstar- tom- white pelt with multicolored spots and amber eyes

DEPUTY- Reedslip- tom- gray/brown tabby

MEDICINE CATS- Shellcloud- tom- siamese

Streamspirit- she cat- silver tabby

WARRIORS-

Sedgestep- tom- brown/gray tabby **Apprentice, Riverpaw**

Rowanpelt- tom- ginger tabby

Spotswoop- she cat- blue gray with darker spots

Sootstorm- tom- gray with black spots

Sandthistle- she cat- light golden tabby

Ivyfern- she cat- white with golden spots

Hopewillow- she cat- silver tabby

Gorseflame- tom- gray tabby

Jaggedstripe- tom- white with long jagged black stripe down one hind leg

Flowerfrost- she cat- golden tabby **Apprentice, Rainpaw**

Dewfeather- tom- blue gray

Ripplemist- tom- light gray tabby and pale blue eyes- temporarily in ShadeClan

Embermoon- she cat- ginger tabby

Yellowclaw- tom- golden tabby

Foxleap- she cat- dark ginger

Cindercloud- she cat- dark gray tabby

Dewspots- tom- white with gray spots

Rosecloud- she cat- cream colored pelt

QUEENS-

Blossomshine- she cat- tortoiseshell

Pouncefall- she-cat- blue gray

ELDERS-

Jumpwing- tom- black pelt

Blazemoon- she cat- light ginger tabby

APPRENTICES-

Rainpaw- she cat- tortoiseshell

Riverpaw- tom- silver pelt

BreezeClan

LEADER- Bristlestar- she cat- blue gray with deep blue eyes

DEPUTY- Splashflame- tom- ginger with black ear tips

MEDICINE CATS- Echosight- tom- very dark gray tabby

WARRIORS-

Eelstrike- tom- tan tabby

Juniperheart- she cat- black with white paws

Maplefoot- tom- tortoiseshell **Apprentice, Skypaw**

Stagfeather- she-cat- white with gray/brown spots **Apprentice, Fishpaw**

Doesong- she cat- cream tabby

Otterclaw- tom- brown tabby **Apprentice, Poolpaw**

Sleekfeather- she cat- light golden tabby **Apprentice, Redpaw**

Snakecrawl- tom- gray/brown tabby **Apprentice, Scorchpaw**

Shredthorn- tom- white and gray tabby

Meadowshine- she cat- light brown tabby

Rushleap- she cat- white with brown stripes

Littlehawk- tom- white with brown spots

Owlear- tom- brown tabby

Nightsky- she cat- very dark gray tabby

Fawnskip- she cat- light brown tabby

Mintfern- she cat- gray spotted tabby with emerald eyes

Littleshade- she cat- black pelt with one blue eye and one yellow eye

Timberfall- tom- light brown tabby with light green eyes

Flintstripe- she cat- silver tabby with black paws and muzzle

QUEENS-

Crowshade- she cat- black pelt

ELDERS-

Ashwing- tom- spotted gray

Goosefur- tom- light blue gray tabby

Fogsight- she cat- light gray tabby

APPRENTICES-

Scorchpaw- tom- black furred

Poolpaw- she cat- white pelt

Redpaw- she cat- dark red pelt

Fishpaw- tom- silver pelt

Skypaw- she cat- light ginger

StormClan

LEADER- Deerstar- she cat- light brown with white spots

DEPUTY- Sparkflight- tom- ginger with white flecks **Apprentice, Hawkpaw**

MEDICINE CATS- Oakfern- she cat- reddish brown tabby

Swallowsight- tom- brown tabby

WARRIORS-

Scarclaw- tom- dark ginger with lots of scars

Rivershade- tom- darkish silver tabby

Oatspot- tom- dark brown with lighter brown spots

Ratheart- tom- brown/gray tabby

Sparrowspring- she cat- brown/gray tabby

Leafbreeze- she cat- light bray tabby

Rootwing- she cat- golden with white spots

Thrushtail- she cat- tan tabby

Graycloud- she cat- gray tabby

Fallenstorm- she cat- blue gray

Tinystep- tom- blue gray

Stagpelt- tom- dark gray tabby

QUEENS-

Goldentail- she cat- gold tabby

ELDERS-

Fennelleaf- tom- gray tabby

Elderbark- she cat- silver tabby

Willowleaf- she cat- tortoiseshell

APPRENTICES-

Hawkpaw- tan pelt

Cats Outside Clans-

Ivy- she cat- white with black eartips and paws

Bracken- tom- golden brown with white chest and paws

Hope- she cat- black with gray paws, ears, and tailtip, and emerald eyes

Stream- she cat- gray blue

Fern- she cat- spotted silver

Bristle- she cat- white with black spots, one yellow eye, and one purple eye

Birch- tom- brown spotted tabby (without stripes) and emerald green eyes

Silver- she cat- light silver with a darker stripe down her back

Golden- she-cat- golden tabby

Chapter 20

[image]

lmao i love the picture above

Jayflight woke up in a dream and felt soft, light moss under her paws.

StarClan!

Jayflight looked up to see a brown-furred she cat with deep amber-orange eyes, with stars glittering in her fur. A StarClan cat.

Jayflight opened her mouth to ask who the she cat was, but the mysterious cat began talking instead.

"I'm glad to see that you could make it, Jayflight."

"Erm...thanks?" coming to StarClan in a dream wasn't exactly a choice.

The she cats amber eyes flickered like fire. "I am Briarstar." she said. "I was leader of ShadeClan before Twigstar." Briarstar smiled. "She was also my apprentice." she shook out her fur. "Well, that's enough about me. Let's get to why you came."

Briarstar! Jayflight felt honored to be speaking to Briarstar- she had died when Jayflight and Ravenclaw were only kits. Was she going to tell her what she needed to know about the Shadow Sea?

"You were right to come to StarClan. We can give you information, but I'm afraid that we don't have much." Briarstar frowned. "We have an information source, but you will have to find it yoursleves."

"Your*selves?"* Jayflight asked. "Who's going to go with me? Only Ravenclaw, Twigstar, and Sunwatcher know."

Briarstar sighed. "The Clans will have to work *together."* She said. "You can't defeat this dark force with only one Clan."

Jayflight nodded. She hadn't seen it that way, since that's not exactly what the Clans taught. But her heart warmed at the thought of working with Rosepaw, Dewpaw, and Mintpaw, who were probably warriors at this point, to defeat the Shadow Sea.

"So what do we need to do?" Jayflight asked.

Briarstar repiled, "You need to go to the twolegplace. There you will find a cat with the power to bring stars to the Clans. Powerful enough to help defeat the Shadows."

Jayflight's mind took that in. All the Clans needed to work together to find a special cat to help them. But...how could one cat make a difference against an army of vicious Shadow Sea cats? Where were they in the twolegplace? Her mind buzzed with about a million questions.

"Um..Briarstar?" Jayflight began. "How will I know when I find this cat?"

Briarstar merely smiled. "You will know."

After a moment, her face darkened. "But beware. Some cats will choose to walk away from the stars instead of to them." Briarstar shook her head like there were bees in her brain. "I wish I could give you more information on the cats we are fighting, but StarClan does their best to stay away from them, as it's too dangerous, and they are gaining power."

"It's alright. I understand." Jayflight responded. *No matter what it takes,* she thought, *I'm going to help save the Clans. I'm going to find the starry cat.*

This is going to work.

Briarstar cleared her throat. "There was a cryptic prophecy, but I thought it would be easier on us all just to tell you what to do. Do you want to hear it?"

"Yes, please." Jayflight responded. She always liked the pretty words in cryptic prophecies, even if they were talking about her death. She had heard a few old ones, in elders tales.

Briarstar began to speak;

"Look beyond,

to find what you seek.

What you think

is worthless and weak.

You must work together,

follow the call.

Or all the Clans,

may perish and fall."

Jayflight felt awe course through her body. *Well, we would never have figured that out, that's for sure.*

"Wow." was all Jayflight could think of to say. "StarClan sure are some poets, aren't they?"

"They sure are." said Briarstar, a smile tugging the edge of her mouth. "I think it is time for you to go back. But when you do." she paused for a moment.

"Tell Twigstar I'm proud of her."

did you like this chapter? It was fun to write! especially coming up with the prophecy. its a little short tho :/ but thanks for reading!

Chapter 21

[image]

After Jayflight drifted off to have her chat with StarClan, Ravenclaw assumed that it would be alright for him to go to sleep, too. She was with StarClan- surely it would keep her safe. And Ravenclaw was tired.

He curled up in the soft moss in the small clearing, wondering if maybe he would dream of StarClan too. He still felt a small prick of jealousy at the fact that Jayflight could communicate with StarClan and not him.

She's a medicine cat, he thought. *She has different types of burdens. Its not all just happy-go-lucky dreams from StarClan.*

But he fell asleep with the little prick of jealousy like a thorn in his pelt, lodged just deep enough to where he couldn't reach it.

He had thought he drifted into a dark, black, peaceful sleep with no dreams. But that was when Ravenclaw realized- he was *concious* of the blackness. He could *feel* that he was asleep.

As soon as he was about to wake himself up, struggle out of the odd feeling, a voice rang out in his ears.

"Hello, Ravenclaw. How nice to see you again."

Darkspirit!

"I thought you wouldn't return. You've had...*plenty* of time to consider my offer. I almost thought that you were going to decline. But a little spark of jealousy brought you here, didn't it?"

Its like he can read my thoughts *or something,* Ravenclaw thought, shuddering. "How did I get here?"

"Well, simple." Darkspirit said, his lip curling into a smile that didn't quite reach his eyes. "You fell asleep jealous, and your subconcious

turned that little spark into a fire."

Ravenclaw did notice that his little prick of jealousy had turned into a full on itch, something that he felt wouldn't go away until he *did* something about it.

"Well, bringing me here didn't help me, did it?" Ravenclaw asked. "So i'll just go now, thanks." he closed his eyes, hoping to wake himself in the real world, getting a little flicker of fear when he realized he didn't know how.

"Now, now, you still haven't answered me about my offer!" Darkspirit said it like a kit who had missed its chance to catch a butterfly.

"I know what you are." Ravenclaw spat. "You and your sister. I know what you did."

Darkspirit's eyes grew wide like a kit. "I didn't *know* what I was doing, Ravenclaw. I was young and distracted." Ravenclaw searched his eyes for lies, but he found it hard to tell if Darkspirit was lying.

I mean....I've done some pretty questionable things.

But not as questionable as him.

"You *killed* cats!" Ravenclaw said, louder than he had intended. "You and Ivythorn. You got *yourselves* killed!"

At the mention of her name, a she cat that had to be Ivythorn slipped out of the shadowy forest behind the beach where Ravenclaw and Darkspirit stood. Her tortoiseshell pelt gleamed in the constant moonlight, and Ravenclaw could have sworn there was a glint of blood in her fur.

But what scared Ravenclaw about her the most, appeared when she swung her head to look at them. One of her eyes was missing, had been totally clawed out, leaving a huge scar covering her eye.

"I heard my name?" she said. Her voice was laced with a sweet poison.

"Who's this?" She said, swinging her paw in Ravenclaw's direction. When she raised her arm, he noticed another scar along her chest. He shivered.

"This is Ravenclaw. He might join us." Darkspirit replied. *How are these cats* Sunwatcher's *siblings?*

Ivythorn's expression shifted, her scarred muzzle twisting into a grin. She slinked up to Ravenclaw, and stopped when she was a few inches in front of him. He could definitely smell the blood on her pelt now.

"Yes, please do join us, darling, we'll have so much fun! Everyone here is working to become great warriors. To learn how to avoid the..." She exchanged a glance with Darkspirit. "*mistakes* we made in our youth."

I mean...every cat deserves a second chance, right? And if all else goes wrong, all I have to do is wake up, if I can figure it out. The small jealous part of him was giving way. This didn't feel *right*, exactly, but maybe he could become a better warrior to serve his Clan.

And maybe my clan will start to appreciate me as much as my sister.

"I'll give it a shot." Ravenclaw said. Then, to be more clear, and to silence the doubts in his head, he said,

"I'll train with you in the Shadow Sea."

Epilogue

[image]

The tom chewed on his bite of mouse. The prey around the twolegplace wasn't as easy to catch as forest prey, but it would do.

Their little group of three was currently living on the edge of twolegplace, where the tom often went into the forest to observe the forest cats.

"Did you see anything today?" he asked the two she cats.

"No." answered the golden she cat. "Nothing but stupid twolegs and kittypets."

"Actually, I saw a few cats today." answered the silver she cat. "About six or seven. They were coming from the territory where those big groups of cats like to hint and live and stuff. You know, where you like to watch." She said, guesturing to the tom.

Maybe it's that she cat I always see with the plants, he thought. *maybe I'll finally get to talk to her...*

"How close were they?" the tom asked. "To our camp?"

"I don't know exactly." The silver she cat responded. "I saw them from the wall. They were pretty far away, but if that was a few hours ago, they would be arriving here soon, assuming here is where they're headed."

The tom sat up. "I'm going to go look for them." he said, getting up from his mouse. "I'll be right back."

Just then, the voices sounded outside the small clearing where they ate.

"Are you *sure?"*

"Ouch, that's my tail, you furball! Just because it's dark doesn't

mean I'm blind!"

The tom flicked his tail to give the she cats a signal, and they both crept into the bushes, ready to attack if it came to that.

The tom stood in the center of the clearing, prepared as the mysterious cats slid through the bushes.

Authors note: end

I MADE IT! I ACTUALLY FINISHED THE BOOK!
if you're reading this, thank you so much for reading my book! you have no idea how much it means to me! :)

If you enjoyed the book, please let me know! and keep an eye out for the upcoming sequel: Silver's Power !

question: who was your favorite character? leave your answer in the comments!

again, TYSM!

-Jay :D